



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS  
November/December 2006

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# AMERICAN WHITewater

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

## American Whitewater Journal

November / December 2006

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### Safety First

#### AW Wants to Know: "What's Your Sign?"

By Eric Nic's

As the day wound I got to work and was showing the staff of the field station to the nearby creek. I was about to get to the creek when I noticed a sign on the wall. It was a sign that said "What's Your Sign?"

It was a sign that said "What's Your Sign?" and it was a sign that said "What's Your Sign?" and it was a sign that said "What's Your Sign?"



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### Stewardship Updates

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By Kevin Colburn

A federal judge has ruled that the government's goal of providing power is not always the priority in a landmark case involving the proposed construction of a dam on the Snake River in Idaho.

#### AW Clean Flow Study Reveals Opportunities

By Emma Johnson

The study of the AW Clean Flow Study has revealed several opportunities for improving river flow and habitat in the Snake River Basin.

#### Mid-Atlantic Benefits on the Way

By Kevin Colburn

The mid-Atlantic region is set to receive significant benefits from the proposed construction of a dam on the Potomac River.

#### Expansive River Releases Proposed

By Kevin Colburn

The proposed construction of a dam on the Snake River will include expansive river releases to maintain habitat and flow.

#### AW Works on the Meritmark River Sets New Standard

By Kevin Colburn

The American Whitewater organization has set a new standard for river conservation and stewardship in the Meritmark River Basin.

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### CFC UnitedWay #2302

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Brian Jennings honing his creekin' skills on the Gauley River  
Photo by Tanya Shuman



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# Purpose American Whitewater

## River Stewardship: An Integrated Approach

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

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

**CONSERVATION:** AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished through direct participation in public decision-making

processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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# Executive Director The Journey Ahead

## American Whitewater Shapes National Policy as Founding Member of the Outdoor Alliance

By Mark Singleton

According to new report released by the Outdoor Industry Association, human-powered outdoor recreation contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy and generates \$88 billion in annual state and national tax revenue. Additionally, the outdoor recreation economy touches over 8 percent of America's personal consumption expenditures, more than 1 in every 12 dollars circulating in the economy. The simple pleasures of human-powered activities — such as hiking, bicycling, paddling, skiing and climbing — are enjoyed by more than 150 million Americans each year. Despite the common theme of nature-based recreation and respectful enjoyment of natural resources, these user groups have seldom bonded together to speak in a common voice. Until now!

American Whitewater has teamed up with the Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Hiking Society, International Mountain Bicycling Association, and Winter Wildlands Alliance to join forces and establish the Outdoor Alliance. With this coalition of founding national groups, the Outdoor Alliance seeks to protect and secure quality outdoor recreation opportunities on the nation's public lands and waters through a collective voice and influence of human-powered outdoor recreation participants.

Supported in part by funding from the Turner Foundation, the Outdoor Alliance will help its member user groups improve their grassroots organization and outreach capabilities by educating key decision makers about the size, characteristics, and needs of the human-powered outdoor recreation constituency and by coordinating and mobilizing the Alliance's collective grassroots members on key issues.

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

The Outdoor Alliance has retained Adam Cramer (American Whitewater board member) and his Washington D.C. firm, Leiter & Cramer PLLC, to serve as its policy architect and general counsel. Adam will provide unified guidance to the member groups in stewardship and public policy initiatives.

Through the Outdoor Alliance, American Whitewater and other human-powered outdoor recreation groups can flex collective political muscle in setting national policy. This comes at a critical shift in the way our public lands are being viewed as the extractive industries of the last century (timber, mining and rangeland) are in tension with experience-based use of public lands. By working with our founding partners in the Outdoor Alliance, AW and other human-powered recreation interests stand to shape public policy at levels that were simply not possible when we worked as disconnected interest groups.

American Whitewater and other founding members of the Outdoor Alliance believe this coalition of diverse recreation organizations will help to level the playing field in today's debate over recreation on public lands, and will give a voice to millions of Americans who share our concerns but who are not being heard. Alliance members share the view that the time is ripe for an ambitious, coalition-led effort to reclaim the advantage in our national discussion of quality outdoor recreation issues and to speak out on behalf of protecting the natural systems we cherish. 



P.S. To download a copy of the OIA economic impact report, "The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy," go to: <http://www.outdoorindustry.org/pdf/FinalOutdoorRecreationReportEC.pdf>

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# Safety First

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## AW Wants to Know, “What’s Your Sign?”

By Eric Nies

At the last second, I spy it—an evil log spanning the width of the little channel I’m running. It’s mostly covered with a thin layer of water, and is invisible until I’m almost on top of it. With no other options, I accelerate and grind over it and fortunately it goes okay. But I don’t feel good about it, and I sure don’t feel good about my buddies in the eddy just above, who are about to chase me through the same slot.

As I head downstream (this was a creek sneak into a big-volume rapid, and my next eddy is 100 yards away), I holler something and sort of wave my paddle spastically, to give my buddies some kind of heads’ up on the log. Half a second later I am gone, and all I can do is hope for the best.

A minute later we are all reunited at the bottom of the rapid. Everyone is fine, and everyone feels like they burned up a lot of river luck getting over that log.

Thinking back, I’m not sure what my best move would have been there. I could have given the generic STOP signal, and that might have prompted my buddies to scout or wait for another signal. The STOP is hard to give quickly or on the fly, though. It’s a horizontal paddle held high and clear, and you know it’s a STOP because the person giving it holds it for a while, or pumps it at you, or chirps their whistle, or makes eye contact and gives you the “don’t come down here” stinkeye look while shaking their head “no.”

Another option would have been the SCOUT signal, followed by a quick point back at the slot. I know two signals for SCOUT: shading your eyes with your hand (like Daniel Boone scanning the horizon), or pointing at your own eyes with your index and middle fingers (this is probably the clearer and better signal to use). Usually I use the SCOUT when I’m settled in an eddy, or standing on shore,

or floating away from a drop I wish I’d scouted. Like the STOP, it works best when you have eye contact with your buddy, and when you have bit of time to send the message.

I use SCOUT in two ways: either I’m telling my buddies I’m going to scout (point at myself, flash the SCOUT, then point at the area in question), or I’m telling my buddies that the drop is funky, and they’d better scout it for themselves (point at them, flash the SCOUT, point at the area in question.) Often this SCOUT IT YOURSELF message happens after my buddies and I have spent a couple of frustrating minutes pointing, gesturing, and shouting across the river about how to run some blind drop with a hidden rock or some such in it.

In the opening scenario, I don’t think that either the STOP or the SCOUT signs would have worked. I didn’t have a chance to make eye contact, which is key for a lot of non-verbal river communication, and I only had a moment. So, I couldn’t really give the SCOUT, and I think that the STOP would probably have been mistaken for a lame rail-grab or an air-brace.

Another option would have been the EMERGENCY signal, namely, a waving paddle and/or a big, repeated whistle blast. This might have worked. It probably would have confused my buddies, and they might have hesitated and maybe hopped out of their boats to see why I was freaking out. That might have given us a chance to communicate in detail, or they might have scouted and seen the log themselves. Alternatively, they might have thought that I saw something bad happening downriver, and would have just charged down faster to help out.

Or I could have done a whistle CHIRP. In my mind, there are three basic whistle signals. First is the big repeated emergency blast—three blasts, to be precise, but if someone is tooting their head off, I figure that something awfully bad is happening. The second whistle signal is the occasional mournful single long toot. This is the one you use to identify where you are when

you or someone else is lost in the woods or along the riverbank, and you’re trying to find each other.

Then there’s the CHIRP, a brief, sharp, single toot that means “hey, look over here.” That brief toot cuts through river noise in a way that shouting can’t, and lets everyone within earshot know that something significant is going on: maybe there’s a swimmer who needs some help, or maybe someone forgot that the next rapid is a portage, and is blithely heading into it. I do not use the CHIRP casually. Whistles are loud and obnoxious, and every time I hear one my pulse rate shoots up—and this is how it should be. The CHIRP is a good generic tool that means “heads up, something is going on.”

## Send Us Your Signals

What I wanted that day on the river—and what I still want—is a good hand signal for WOOD, something quick and unmistakable that I could flash with one hand. And there are other signals that we need: BOOF, HOLE, SWIMMER, RUN JUST LEFT OF CENTER, etc. I’ve seen some different signals for these, but nothing that really grabs me as the perfect solution (Sorry, Kyle, but your WOOD signal takes two hands, and also exceeds our PG rating).

What have you come up with as a really good river signal? AW wants to know. Send us your signals to [signals@amwhitewater.org](mailto:signals@amwhitewater.org). Send us a photo or clear description, as well as a SHORT description of how and when it’s used. We are definitely looking for the best signals for WOOD and BOOF, along with whatever else you have that’s good. Selected entries will be published in future AW Journals, and may work their way into a coveted permanent spot in the AW safety code. And, the first people to send in the signals we select will get some prime AW swag. So become a part of whitewater history and send us your signals. 

*Rok Sribar giving the universal sign for YOU GO FIRST.*

Photo by Cathy Howard



# Letters to the Editor

**Dear American Whitewater,**

I was just rereading the March/April issue and read again Rocky Contos' article on paddling the Rio Sirupa. I've known about Rocky's exploits and have seen his accounts on various posting boards over the years. At times I'm impressed with his guts (like on the Rio Sirupa) and other times I've wondered if he just has a death wish.

No one can deny his desire to go places where no one else has, but his whole concept of paddling difficult and remote water alone brings up a safety issue, at least to me. We all know and (usually) respect the rule that three paddlers are the minimum for a whitewater trip. Most of us have probably broken that rule by going with two people when a third wasn't available. I know some of us also paddle alone at times.

My personal problem came about when a member of our Shasta Paddlers' club boated Class V Slate Creek solo, and then wrote up an article in our club newsletter boasting of his first solo descent of this creek (Slate is run frequently, especially by this individual). Now, I submit that the difference between a descent of a very difficult and dangerous creek with a group vs. alone is merely one of stupidity, lack of judgment, or both, but my problem was that he publicized this artificial (in my opinion, at least) "milestone" in our newsletter. In our area, we've had a history of problems with the local sheriff closing creeks and rivers (illegally, in our opinion) because they are too dangerous. As I told the fellow, if he got himself killed up on Slate Creek, do you think anybody else would ever see that run again?

I did appreciate the fact that Rocky's story downplayed the solo aspect of his trip, which was not the case with our newsletter situation.

So, while I certainly respect Rocky's right to explore areas of the earth that few do, I still have a concern that publishing accounts of Class V solo runs could encourage similar behavior from those common-sense challenged members of our community.

Just some food for thought.  
Thanks,  
Mark D. Twitchell  
Safety Chairman / Shasta Paddlers  
Redding, CA

**Dear American Whitewater,**

I wish to comment on the write-up about the flotilla of rafts that dominoed into a fallen tree on Idaho's Marsh Creek (AW September/October 2006).

Did they forget to scout? The minute the river became blind somebody should have been scouting on foot until the route could be guaranteed, or until the hazard was spotted—especially since this section is known to collect strainers.

Was their communication system adequate? Enough distance should have been kept between the boaters with communication—whether whistles or hand singles (or even getting out of the boat to run up and tell the others the status of the river)—around every blind turn. This discipline must be absolute; no exceptions and no lapses.

The article states that one of the two kayakers was able to eddy out and avoid the hazard. Ergo the kayakers should have been the leaders. Upon seeing the hazard and eddying out, they were in a position to tell the others.

Thus, this ordeal, and close tragedy, can be made into a profound lesson.

Barbara Brown

**Dear Barbara,**

*I appreciate your concern for the group in question. However, I don't believe that they failed to notice the danger their group was in, nor did they try to hide it from anyone. I applaud the group for its honest reporting of a difficult episode and I hope paddlers will continue to feel comfortable telling their stories—whatever their nature—in this magazine without fear of criticism by third parties. We can certainly have a civil discourse on the best plan of action for a group of rafts on an extremely continuous river with few eddies. My guess is that veterans of Marsh Creek will find it hard to reproach Mike Holmstrom's group's safety plan given the nature and length of the run.*

*For an in-depth discussion of the scouting dilemma, see page 48 of this issue."*

Sincerely,

Ambrose Tuscano



# News & Notes

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## **\$10,000 Donated to Green River Access Fund in Memory of Daniel DeLaVergne**

Filming just completed on the Zimmer Orthopedics Sales Success Kayaking Film featuring former freestyle C-1/ OC-1 National and World Champion Brian Miller on the Narrows of the Green River with filming done by Spencer Cooke of Effort Inc.

Zimmer is the Global Leader in the orthopedic device industry. Zimmer decided to put together a global internal

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*Spencer Cooke films Brian Miller running Go Left on the Green Narrows*

photo by Effort.tv

motivational film featuring their six most successful sales representatives drawing metaphors and parallels to Class I – VI whitewater kayaking. Interviews featured Zimmer's top reps with backdrops such as the Golden Gate Bridge and the Hollywood sign, just to name a few.

Mr. Rich Greenhagen, President of Greenhagen Medical, which has distributor rights for Zimmer's products in the Carolinas, picked the Narrows of the Green River as the perfect location for the film.

Filming on the Green took three days. Mr. Greenhagen hiked in to enjoy the sheer



*Daniel DeLaVergne*

photo by Johnnie Kern



# News & Notes

beauty of the Green River Gorge and to introduce the film. Class I–VI whitewater was introduced and then run by Brian Miller with Spencer Cooke directing and calling the shots. Gorilla was run a total of five times, Go Left and Die and Sunshine were run four times each.

## Brian Miller's Perspective

Mr. Greenhagen, who has been a friend of mine for years and familiar with my paddling accomplishments approached me with his idea for the project. Of course I was game and knew the perfect spot just 30 minutes from my house. I immediately called Spencer and he too was in.

Initially my motivations for the project were self-centered. Cool, getting paid to paddle the Green and having a good time doing it. However, as I reflected on the prospects and depth of the project, it dawned on me that this project was given to me for a bigger purpose. I, like much of my boating family in Asheville and across the globe, was in mourning of the loss of Daniel DeLaVergne. This was my opportunity to lose my selfish tendencies and think big—like Daniel would have done. I wanted to honor the legacy of my fallen friend, to preserve one of his, mine and many others' favorite places to paddle for future generations of paddlers to come. I called Spencer with the idea to underbid our services and ask for a donation of \$5000 to the Green River Access Fund in memory of Daniel and he agreed. Mr. Rich Greenhagen of Zimmer graciously agreed to donate the money. After he hiked into the gorge and witnessed the spectacles we refer to as "Getting Your Squeeze On" or "Spanking the Monkey" with me in the eddy below Gorilla and he up on the rocks, Mr. Greenhagen shouted he was going to double his donation from \$5000 to \$10,000. I tried to yell a "Hell Yea and Thank You" but my voice cracked. All I could do was float in that eddy flooded with emotions, look up at Gorilla, with Spencer and Raymond eddied out at the notch, remember all the great times we have had on that river and missing Daniel.

Daniel's death has changed a lot of how I think about paddling and I hope it can change yours. We need to celebrate each other and our rivers. We are all family with the common bond of the river running through our veins. We, as paddlers, are the true stewards of the river and we each need to take ownership for our part in conserving our playgrounds. To paraphrase JFK, "It is not what the river can do for me but what can I do for the river." I would challenge every paddler and outdoorsman out there to take ownership. If you are involved in a project concerning the river consider how you could broaden your efforts to benefit the river. If you are associated with a corporate organization, find out how they determine where they will make their charitable donations and ask them to consider donating to an organization that benefits the river. If your kids go to camp, find out what the organizations are doing to preserve the resources they use to generate income. Put a trash bag in your boat and pick up litter during and after your run. Not only is it good for the river, it is good Karma and if the bag is air tight it will make for good floatation if you swim! Go big or go small just go do something positive for the river. We all miss Daniel and in mine and Spencer's simple way this was our opportunity to let our actions speak for themselves.

I would like to thank Mr. Rich Greenhagen and the fine folks of Zimmer for their kindness and generous donation to the Green River Access fund in Daniels' memory.

I would also like to thank those that helped with the project: Liquid Logic, Astral Buoyancy, Immersion Research, Aqua Bound, Shred Ready, Spencer Cooke of Effort Inc., Raymond Cotton, Abhay Patel "Green River Sherpa," my family for their support and Daniel's family for allowing us to honor their son. 



*The 2005 Green Race, Daniel at the put-in.*

photo by Christie Dobson

Mr. Greenhagen shouted he was going to double his donation from \$5000 to \$10,000. I tried to yell a "Hell Yea and Thank You" but my voice cracked.



*Brian Miller, Spencer Cooke and Rich Greenhagen in the Narrows of the Green River*

photo by Effort.tv

## 4th Annual Reno River Festival Set For May 10-13, 2007

RENO, Nev. —The Reno River Festival is all set for another year of world-class kayaking on the Truckee River in downtown Reno, Nev., May 10-13, 2007. Now in its 4th year, the Reno River Festival brings together top kayak professionals and amateur athletes from around the world to compete at the nationally acclaimed Truckee River Whitewater Park. The Reno River Festival showcases kayaking action at its best with a weekend full of competitions, demos, clinics and an expo featuring the hottest products on the market, all set in one of the most adventurous cities in the country—Reno-Tahoe, America’s Adventure Place.

“In just three short years, the Reno River Festival is now recognized in the kayaking industry as one of the premier, first-class events in the country,” said Jim Litchfield, Truckee River Whitewater Park designer and principal of Fluid Concepts, competition producer for the Reno River Festival. “Now, as we go into our fourth year, there’s a huge expectation in the industry for the event each year and our hopes are to attract even more competitors as well as provide additional opportunities for participants of all levels to find a spot to compete while continuing to provide access to those that want to learn.”

According to Deanna Ashby, executive director of marketing for the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority (RSCVA), “The Reno River Festival is a great example of what our America’s Adventure Place message means and the event brings adventure to life right in the heart of downtown Reno. All just steps outside our hotel room doors. Spectators and competitors can expect amazing whitewater action with the addition of new events and competitions, as well as demos, instructional clinics and exhibitors.”

The Reno River Festival is held at the \$1.5 million Truckee River Whitewater Park, located in the heart of Reno’s booming downtown business and arts district. The park, with rapids rated Class II and III, is both Nevada’s and the region’s first whitewater park and kayak slalom racing course, totaling 2,600 feet in length and featuring north and south channels that surround an outdoor amphitheater and park. There are 11 “drop pools” and specially-placed boulders for kayaking maneuvers, a slalom racing course, and 7,000 tons of smooth flat rocks along the shores for easy river access and spectator seating. 

*For more details about the 4th annual Reno River Festival, please visit [www.RenoRiverFestival.com](http://www.RenoRiverFestival.com).*

*Reno River Festival on the Truckee River.*

photo by Mark Singleton



# Stewardship Updates

By Kevin Colburn

## Judge Says Power is Not Always First Priority At Dams in Landmark Case

A new court case has settled one of the longest standing debates over a dammed river, Washington State's North Fork Skokomish River. The dam owner first received a license for their dam—which severely impacted the river, its salmon runs, and the native culture that depended on them—in 1924. The license expired in 1974 but numerous delays within the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission led to an unheard of 24-years of annual licenses, which allowed the power company to operate under the old and environmentally devastating 1924 rules. In 1998 FERC finally issued a new 40-year license for the project that conflicted with the tribes, other federal agencies, the state, and the power company. Lawsuits were filed and consolidated and the judge issued a stunning decision on August 22nd, 2006. The judge decided that the other federal agencies had absolute authority over prescribing flows necessary to protect the river and its salmon, and, in a very exciting ruling, found that FERC can issue licenses where required environmental mitigation renders power generation at the dam uneconomical. The utility had made the absurd argument that dams causing the most harm with the least economic return should only have to do a minimal amount of mitigation to keep the project economic.

The judge cited the 1986 amendment to the Federal Power Act that is our favorite piece of legislation, the one responsible for nearly every whitewater release and access area on a dammed river:

“In deciding whether to issue any license under this Part for any project, the Commission, in addition to the power and development purposes for which licenses are issued, shall give equal consideration to the purposes of energy conservation, the protection, mitigation of damage to, and enhancement of, fish and wildlife (including related spawning grounds and habitat), the protection of recreational

opportunities, and the preservation of other aspects of environmental quality.”  
– Federal Power Act

The judge then wrote: “Therefore, the question we must decide is whether “reasonable terms” can, in some cases, be terms that may have the effect of shutting a project down or occasioning a change of ownership. We think the answer is yes, especially here where, according to FERC’s factual finding, Tacoma has recouped its initial investment plus a significant annual return on that investment. The obligation to give “equal consideration” to wildlife protection and the environment implies that, at least in some cases, these environmental concerns will prevail.”

“In conclusion, we find persuasive FERC’s argument that Congress implicitly extended to FERC the power to shut down projects either directly, by denying a new license, or indirectly, by imposing reasonable and necessary conditions that cause the licensee to reject the new license.”

This is a truly awesome decision for rivers. It is now clear that fish, wildlife, or recreation can take priority over power generation in dam relicensings if it is clear the greatest public benefit is to be had through managing for those non-power uses.

## AW Cheoah Flow Study Reveals Opportunities

Brace yourselves for a surprise: studies show that paddlers love North Carolina’s Cheoah River. The Cheoah River study carried out online by AW in the spring of 2006 revealed that startling fact and many others that will help the USFS and other stakeholders better manage the river. Roughly 250 paddlers took the survey and AW then wrote a detailed report, which we shared with the Forest Service, Graham County, the Power Company, and other stakeholders. Paddlers suggested some higher flow releases, vegetation management, and specific access improvements. Paddlers recommended

that the minimum acceptable flow is 934cfs, a good standard trip is 1225cfs, the single best flow is 1418cfs, and 1844cfs was the ticket for a high challenge trip. Current releases are 1000cfs. AW carried out and shared this study in order to add value to the collaborative management of the Cheoah.

## Mid-Atlantic Benefits on the Way

2007 will be an exciting year for paddlers in the Mid Atlantic. American Whitewater has been working with volunteers on several projects to improve flows and access on several regional classics. We are working towards a new flow schedule on the Upper Yough that will provide releases on Saturdays virtually all summer. Also up for discussion are releases on Maryland’s Savage and North Branch Potomac Rivers. Pennsylvania’s Lehigh River is being adaptively managed to improve flows for recreation as well, and we expect 2007 to offer additional benefits. We are also testing out options for increasing access to Ohiopyle Falls, and the future looks promising. In the works for future years are recreational releases on Stony Creek and a new whitewater park on the Susquehanna, both in Pennsylvania.

## AW’s Work on the Merrimack River Sets New Standard

New Hampshire’s Merrimack River should have major runs of Shad, Herring, Eels, and other seagoing fish, but these runs are significantly diminished by the presence of dams. The owner of these dams recently tried to use the new 2005 Energy Policy Act to challenge federal requirements to improve fish passage. American Whitewater, with the help of volunteer Tom Quarles of Devine Millimet, LLC, intervened in the case to support the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s mandatory fish passage requirements. The case was settled in August, in advance of a hearing by an Administrative Law Judge. The settlement protects fish passage provisions, and sets

a new standard for public involvement in these proceedings. Prior to our case on the Merrimack, parties other than the dam owner and the government were not included in negotiations – leading to political vulnerability and settlements that jeopardize the river’s restoration. Thanks to our superb volunteer assistance and unique regional stewardship model we were able to set a new standard in the implementation of the 2005 Energy Policy Act.

## Esopus River Releases Protected (NY)

The City of New York was granted a new permit to release water into the Esopus River. The releases deliver drinking water to the city, but turbidity of the water raised concerns about the releases impacting fish and violating water quality standards. After a scientific review, the releases were found to actually benefit fish because as Wayne Elliot, the regional fisheries manager for DEC testified, turbidity does stress the fish, but not having enough water in the river makes it impossible for them to live. So, New York citizens get to keep their taps running and paddlers get the fringe benefit of a treasured Class II whitewater run. [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)



*Above: Cheaoh*

photo by Kevin Colburn

*Left: Esopus River Releases*



# Stewardship Updates

## FERC Recommends New Whitewater Opportunities for the North Fork Rogue Oregon

By Thomas O'Keefe

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) released their final Environmental Assessment (EA) on the North Fork Rogue's Prospect Hydroelectric Project. American Whitewater has been working on this project for the past few years with the assistance of volunteer Bill Cross who has represented AW.

The EA provides a favorable review of whitewater boating and proposes a three-year study period to assess boating demand on this reach. During this time flows would be restored to the river on one weekend each in July, August, and September, and on the 4th of July and Labor Day. This will restore summer boating opportunities on the great Class IV reach that begins with the Class V Avenue of the Boulders.

One of the most important conditions AW worked for was access to the powerhouse. This would allow paddlers to access a take-out for the short Class IV run, which contains over a dozen great rapids. It will also provide put-in access to the wonderful scenic Class III reach downstream of the powerhouse that offers opportunities for year-round boating. While FERC originally rejected access at the powerhouse as "unsafe" they reversed this determination following comments we filed stating, "After reviewing additional information provided by American Whitewater in response to the draft EA, we find that most of the public safety concerns noted by us in the draft EA could be addressed with further planning and implementation of some additional design features (e.g., signage) as we discuss in section."

FERC further recommended that PacifiCorp provide daily flow information. AW always supports reporting of hourly real-time data to provide boaters with the most useful information on trends. In addition, hourly data gives the public a greater opportunity to monitor project operations. In many cases where we have been the primary group advocating for a gauge we find that soon other stakeholders realize the importance of realtime information for monitoring compliance with project flow requirements.

FERC must still issue a license for this project and make a final determination on recommendations in the EA, but our local volunteers should be proud of what we have accomplished so far.



*A view of the put-in to the Mill Falls stretch of the North Fork Rogue.*

photo by Jon McLaughlin

## AW weighs in on Climate Change Case before the Supreme Court

By Thomas O'Keefe

American Whitewater joined 73 organizations in a "friend of the court" brief filed by the National Wildlife Federation this fall in the first-ever case involving global warming to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. The case, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, et al v. United States Environmental Protection Agency, centers on a 2003 EPA decision not to regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles as pollution.

The Supreme Court's ruling in this case could have far-reaching implications for how the United States addresses its contribution to global warming. The crux of the case involves whether or not greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks should be regulated by the EPA under the Clean Air Act due to their contribution to global warming.

John Kostyack of the National Wildlife Federation noted that "this may indeed be the most diverse coalition ever to file an environmental amicus brief with the Supreme Court." The groups include sporting and conservation organizations, state fish and game departments, professional fish and wildlife societies, zoos and aquariums and religious organizations.

AW will continue work with our partners to weigh in on important policy issues regarding climate change that have major implications for the long-term health of our nation's rivers.

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## How Climate Change Will Impact Kayaking

By Emma Johnson

This spring was awesome for kayaking in the Pacific Northwest. Tons of snow and a slowly warming spring was the perfect combination for consistent and awesome water levels. Somewhere in the back of my mind, though I remember 2005—my first real year of boating—and how river after river reached record low levels. Was 2005 just another fluke, or was it an early warning sign of what is to come in the Northwest and beyond?

Worldwide, the global temperatures reached some of the warmest ever recorded—2005 virtually tied with 1998 as the hottest year on record. For people living in the Northern Hemisphere, 2005 was the hottest year since 1880, the earliest year for which reliable records were available worldwide. Nineteen of the hottest 20 years on record have occurred since 1980.(1) It makes me wonder what 2006 will look like and, I must admit, I am nervous.

The result of a warming Pacific Northwest climate, according to the Climate Impacts Group (<http://www.cses.washington.edu/cig/>) at the University of Washington, is that though the total amount of precipitation has not dramatically differed for Washington, more of that precipitation will fall as rain in the winter, and not snow.

The evidence is in our not too distant past: since 1949 Cascade snow pack has declined 50 percent. In the next decades we will see an acceleration of this trend. The most intense warming will occur on the windward slopes of the Cascade and Olympic mountains. By 2090, mountain temperatures could rise 10 degrees or more, with snowpack levels reduced another 20 percent (2) (i.e. your children

won't be skiing at Snoqualmie Pass).

Such a drop in the area's snowpack could mean that in the future the domestic water supply could diminish by 20 million gallons a day. In addition, 90 percent of Seattle's energy comes from hydropower.(3) More people means more need for energy, and less water means that kayakers may not have plentiful access to the fresh snow melt we love.

### What To Do

Climate change IS happening regardless of any small action we take. We can reduce carbon emissions to the atmosphere through the obvious steps, such as carpooling, buying local food, using biodiesel in diesel engines, recycling, and buying fuel efficient cars, but the reality is that without global commitments from all nations, we aren't going to move the projected path of climate change very much. We will need to learn how to adapt then to these incredible variations, not only with our recreation, but with our use of energy, water, and food.

However, I struggle with the idea of apathy. It is hard to truly "sit back" and watch it happen knowing the implications.

### Offset Kayaking Emissions from Driving to the River

The average driver releases 19.5 lbs of carbon dioxide for every gallon burned in driving (yes, this number is correct). I feel REALLY bad knowing how much carbon dioxide is released just because of my love of kayaking. I've decided to invest personally in alternative energy through a program called "Green Tags" in order to counteract my emissions. The concept is emissions trading—I can emit CO2 if someone else doesn't,



or if I invest in planting enough trees to suck up my release of CO2. There are several organizations that sell Green Tags, including Puget Sound Energy. Another is Bonneville Environmental Foundation at <https://www.greentagsusa.org/GreenTags/index.cfm>. Your money goes to bringing climate neutral wind, solar, and biomass sources of energy on to the grid in places it makes sense.

Local ski areas, including the Summit and Stevens, offer mini-green tags every time you go skiing. [www.skigreen.org](http://www.skigreen.org). Since we don't pay a lift fee for kayaking, it wouldn't quite work as well, but maybe we could all consider a "kayakgreen" donation along with our annual AW Stewardship donations. Food for thought. ☺☺

### Footnotes

1. [http://www.ucsusa.org/global\\_warming/science/recordtemp2005.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/science/recordtemp2005.html)
2. [http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/localnews/2003040140\\_futureweather05m.html](http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/localnews/2003040140_futureweather05m.html)
3. <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/060605/5warming.htm>

# Stewardship Updates

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## AW Files Poe Comments

*By Dave Steindorf*

In September American Whitewater filed comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for the Poe project on the Feather River. These comments, which were filed jointly with Butte County, addressed a number of deficiencies in the DEA, not the least of which was a recommendation to provide no provisions for whitewater recreation in the new license.

The Poe Project is the last project in PG&E's "Stairway of Power" to be relicensed on the North Fork of the

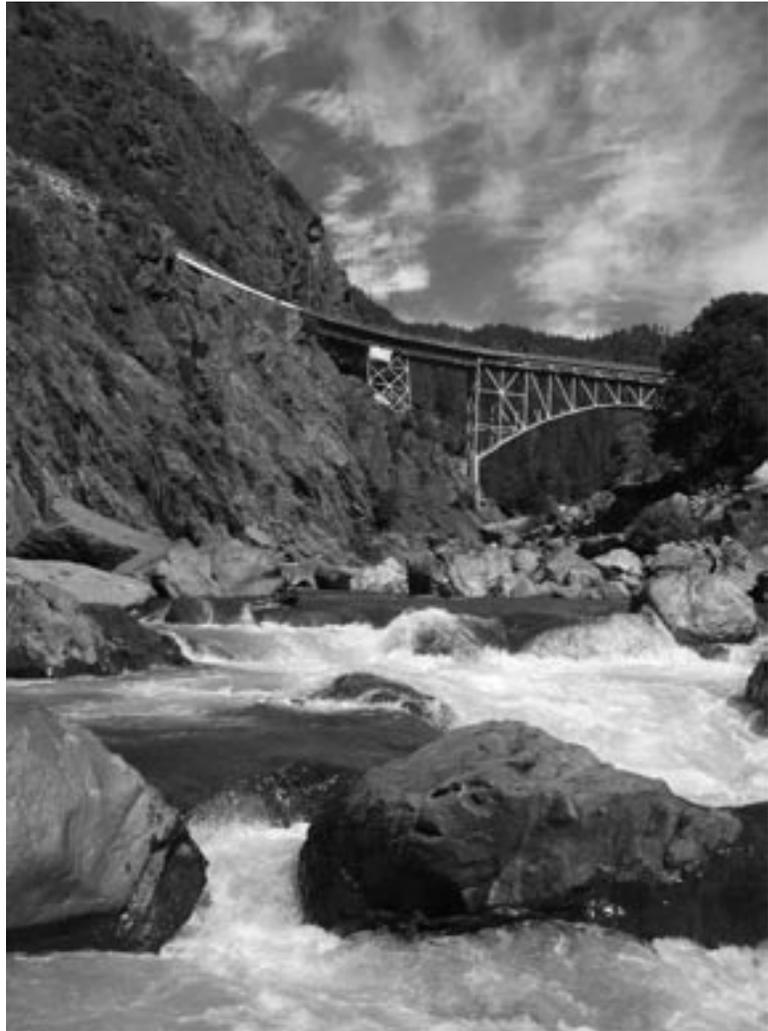
Feather River. The Poe reach contains a 4.5 mile Class V section and a 4.5 mile Class III section. Having two runs of different difficulty in such close proximity makes for a great opportunity. Groups with varying ability levels can find "something for everybody" on this reach. The Poe reach is also different from the Rock Creek and Cresta because these runs flow away from highway 70 and have a more remote wilderness feel. Also users are not faced with the same safety issues of fast moving traffic as they are on the Rock Creek and Cresta reaches upstream.

Our recommendation to FERC included an adaptive whitewater flow schedule that will meet the needs of whitewater recreation and gather information to increase the comfort level of agencies, and specifically their amphibian biologist, in providing recreation flows on the Poe reach. We are also supporting a base flow schedule that that we believe will improve the aquatic ecosystem, particularly the trout fishery. It is our hope that this base flow schedule will provide some minimum level of whitewater opportunity.



We also recommended specific improvements to ramping rates, particularly in the critical frog breeding season (ramping rates are how much flows can change over time). We are happy to report that many of the resource agencies responded to the information provided by AW that showed the impacts to frog egg masses from PG&E's operations during spring spill (see AW 2006 Foothill Yellow Legged Frog analysis). These ramping recommendations will provide for more natural flow conditions in the spring and will hopefully keep frog egg masses from being either stranded or scoured by project flow fluctuations.

AW also recommended a number of non-flow measures that will improve recreation for boaters and non-boaters alike. These included a hiking trail along the remote section of the Poe reach that will be very popular with swimmers, anglers and hikers. We also supported the recommendation to provide access to the Poe reservoir. This will provide a much-needed year-round flatwater paddling opportunity for the area. Last but not least we are recommending that PG&E should construct a boating play feature below the Cresta Powerhouse. We feel that with the regular flows from the Cresta Powerhouse combined with the ample parking would make this an ideal location for such a feature. We also feel that this would be a very efficient way to provide a whitewater opportunity that would be available every day of the week. Additionally, this would require no additional releases of water, no lost power generation, and no expensive biological studies. We hope that PG&E and FERC will see the merit of this recommendation and the others that we included in our filing. 



*Pulga Bridge on the Upper Poe run*

photo by Dave Steindorf

*AW volunteer Charlie Guilbault on the Upper Poe*

photo by Dave Steindorf

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# A Geezer's Guide



## A Geezer's Guide

*By Bill Kirby*

Do you remember glass boats? Harishok life jackets? Jofa helmets? If you do, then you, like or not, are a geezer. We geezers who are still paddling may sometimes feel like phantoms, spirits whose time has come and gone, unwilling to leave behind the world we knew, but unable to step fully into the strange new world that is modern whitewater sport. When did you have the most fun in paddling? I bet it was early in your career, when everything was fresh and every river trip taught you something new. Those days may be long gone, but you can still recapture some of that magic.

After paddling for over 35 years with the

same basic equipment and techniques I thought there were few opportunities for growth in the sport left open to me. More or less by chance I got to know a few of the younger paddlers in my area and I began to think that there might be something new to learn. For the last couple of years I have been making a conscious effort to see and understand what is happening today in our sport. What I've found is that the differences between the old days and modern times are fewer than you might think. My overall impression is that the similarities are greater than the differences, and that the new school is actually quite accessible to, shall we

say, mature paddlers. The rivers haven't changed, but our approach to them can and should move forward. There is a whole range of opportunities for fun waiting for us in the brave new world of paddling. All it takes is a decision to let go of some of our preconceptions. The following is a brief guide to some of the exciting new stuff in our sport.

### Boats

By far the biggest changes in the sport involve the evolution in boat design. Opinions vary on when the development of current designs began, but I date it

to a change in the slalom rules in 1973. Prior to that time, boats could only have convex curves. That is, scooped out bows and sterns were prohibited. This rule was intended to prevent undercutting slalom gates, i.e. passing the bow or stern under a pole while negotiating the gate. This necessarily made boats somewhat bulbous and high volume and kept everything on the surface. The old rules produced many fine river running boats, including slalom boats like the Lettman Mark IV, Prijon Augsburg, and Hahn C-1, as well as purpose-built cruisers like the Holloform River Chaser, Prijon's T-Canyon and all the Perception classics of the 70s and 80s. I think of the fat, convex boats as the genuine old school. Of course, there are still paddlers out there who learned to paddle in foldboats and canvas canoes. These folks probably regard fiberglass boats as new-fangled, so it's all relative.

After 1973 the rules on slalom boat dimensions were relaxed and undercutting became a standard part of racing technique. As a result, boats became flat and slicy, with lower volume, especially in the ends. These designs were built to go underwater. This led to pivot turns, which led to squirt boating, which led to modern playboating. The '73 rules change led to boats like the Phoenix Slipper, Lettmann Mark V, and Prijon's T-Slalom and Tornado. Later refinements led to early playboats like the RPM and its innumerable relatives in the 90s. These boats are often classed as middle school.

If you learned to paddle in old school boats your skills were pretty readily transferred to the middle school. The newer boats were shorter, slower, and easier to turn than the old boats, but there wasn't anything qualitatively different about them. Just as the slalom boats of the 70s were also the standard river runners of their time, the middle school playboats became the river cruisers of their era as well.

As the millennium turned and the new century unfolded the boats got shorter and shorter and many of us old and middle schoolers became more and more

baffled by the developments. At some indeterminate point in time the boats became so short that technique underwent a revolutionary shift. The new school was sho' nuff in the house, y'all.

## New School Technique

We older paddlers have habits and preconceptions that must be adapted to suit today's boats. When I decided to get a short boat and see what all the hubbub was about I started making the rounds of the boat shops and trying out boats as opportunities arose. I went to a boat demo day at one of our local shops here in D.C. looking for some free information. Inside the shop were dozens of paddlers, both new and experienced, trying on boats and chatting with the pros and manufacturers' reps. When the well-known paddler and factory owner who sponsored the event hollered out, "Who wants a free mini-clinic?" all of us prospective buyers looked at each other with the unspoken rhetorical query, "Would a hobo eat a ham sandwich?" Down to the pond behind the shop we went. Once in the water, the instructor asked how much experience each of us had and observed us paddling for a few seconds to assess our skills. As I paddled around in circles he looked at me quizzically and said "Are you a slalom racer?" I admitted that I had been such at a time before the glaciers retreated, and he smiled wryly and said something to the effect that I needed to forget most that I had ever learned about paddling. What I've discovered over the past year of paddling a seven-foot boat has shown this to be an exaggeration with a distinct kernel of truth.

For us old schoolers the revolution in technique can be summed up as follows:

### Don't Lean Back

There's more to it than that, of course, but feeling comfortable in a modern boat pretty much boils down to that. And, it's harder than it sounds.

Here's the short version of why you shouldn't lean back in the new boats. First

of all, they're short. In longer boats it really doesn't matter much if you lean forward or backward; the large amount of volume in front or behind you means you can only affect the trim of the boat slightly. Modern boats are so short that you can easily submerge the bow or stern in flat water with a sharp lean forward or back. This can be disconcerting to paddlers who are used to longer boats, especially in white water where the stern of all boats tends to drop anyway due to the action of waves and holes.

Perhaps more importantly, modern boat hulls are very asymmetrical from front to back. The forward portion is flat from side to side, with more or less sharp chines depending on the design. This is called a planing hull and allows great maneuverability when on a wave. The flat forward hull makes these boats very stable compared to old displacement hull boats, particularly since most of them are somewhat wider than older boats to make up for the overall volume lost in the evolution to extreme shortness.

The aft portion of the hull is often very rounded and usually has lower volume than the bow. This means that when you lean back the stable bow rises out of the water and you are resting on a hull with very little primary stability. Combine this lack of side-to-side stability with the tendency of the low volume stern to sink (stern-squirt) and a paddler new to these boats may feel quite out of control without realizing the source of the problem. It is tempting to dismiss the new boats as twitchy toys unsuited to river cruising, but the whole problem can often be solved merely by keeping your weight forward.

This is probably a bigger problem for experienced paddlers than for new paddlers starting out in modern equipment. I was completely unaware of how often I leaned back until I got in a new boat. These boats won't let you forget this rule, but it took a few months before I fully integrated it into my paddling. Once this basic principle is absorbed the possibilities of the new boats will open before you. Playboating is loads of fun, even while you're learning, and

nothing will improve your combat roll more than aggressive playing. This was an axiom of paddling even back in the day, but playing in a modern boat is one of the aspects of whitewater sport that has truly been revolutionized to a new level of fun in recent years. River running in these boats will give you an entirely different perspective on those tired old runs you've been doing for years, and it's actually easier than in your old boat. Just remember to keep your weight forward.

Get nose plugs. I always thought nose plugs were for geeks. If you want to learn playboating, you'll need them. You'll spend a lot of time upside down. This is a good thing.

New boats have big cockpits and they seem to keep getting bigger. This is the biggest single safety improvement in the history of kayaking. It is also a boon to the mature paddler because it makes entry and exit of the boat, wet or dry, much easier. Some of us have knees and ankles that really appreciate this feature. Also, modern cockpits and the sprayskirts designed to fit them are amazingly dry. I often find that, in cooler weather when a dry top of some sort is feasible, I can paddle my new boat for hours of park-and-play and ride home in the same clothes I wore in the boat, without getting the car seat damp. To someone like myself who used to make his own boats, but could never seem to get the cockpit rim-to-deck junction completely sealed, this is a revelation.

As in life in general, there is no such thing as a free lunch in the area of boat design. The new boats are comfortable, light, and mind-bogglingly maneuverable. But they are also depressingly slow. This is only a problem under certain conditions. First, attaining. Forget it, they don't attain, period. On my home river, the Potomac, the particular arrangement of rapids and flat water make it possible (in a longer boat) to do many multi-mile outings with no shuttle. One can park in one spot, paddle up flat water to one set of rapids for play, attain up to more flat water and continue up to more rapids, and repeat this sequence several times, depending on

the time available and your energy level. In a modern short boat this is no longer an option. The first time I tried one of the standard Potomac attaining routes in my shiny new short boat I was horrified. A boat that won't go up through Difficult Run Rapids? Abomination! Portaging up Wet Bottom? Disgraceful! But, over time I have learned some new routes that are attainable, with lots of effort. Also, it gives a more aerobic workout on the same old rapids than a faster boat does. Mostly, though, I have just accepted that, whatever I'm going to play on, I'll get to it from above, not below.

The second place you may miss some speed is on big water. High water often features big boily eddy lines that take some energy to punch through. A short boat's lack of speed may result in being rejected from the eddy line, followed by a struggle in the whirlpools and conflicting currents. Also, high water often means a wide channel with large features you'll want to miss. If you come over a big wave and find yourself looking down a long slope into a 100-ft wide hole, the pure speed of a long boat will be sorely missed. Under these circumstances a short boat demands good route planning to ensure you'll be in the right place at the right time. As a very experienced big water boating friend said, the great maneuverability of the short boats almost makes up for the lack of speed. Almost, but not quite.

Ferrying is a different exercise in a short boat. In a long boat you are accustomed to setting a very shallow angle to the current, crossing the eddy line, and using the combined velocity of your speed and the current to create an efficient vector across the river, like tacking a sailboat into the wind. Modern short boats, however, have no glide whatsoever. That is, the only speed they have is the speed you just put into your forward stroke. As soon as the stroke is over, they stop. For ferrying, this means that you can forget about adding velocities to make an efficient vector, unless you have a sizable wave available to surf across. As soon as you cross the eddy line your forward speed is dead. So, to ferry a current in a short boat, cross the eddy

line at a relatively sharp angle, and paddle hard to get across the current as quickly as possible. Ferrying in a short boat is an S-turn, not the satisfying, dynamic zoom it is in a faster boat.

Surfing in a short boat is pretty much the same as in a long boat, except modern boats respond much more quickly. They are designed to carve the wave, so the tilt of the boat left or right creates an instant response. Here's another place where you really need to keep your weight forward. The old long boater's surfing pose with the body leaned back and the blade behind you will pull that carefully designed carving bow right out of the water and leave you wallowing on the unstable, round, stern hull, out of control. New boats will change the places you choose to surf. They prefer steeper waves than the long boats, requiring more downward angle to maintain the speed needed to stay on the wave. Newer boats have a huge degree of rocker, so they will happily surf steep, short waves that would cause a longer boat to purl and ender every time.

## Paddles

Until last year I hadn't bought a new paddle in at least 25 years. My straight shaft, 90-degree twist, wooden Mark Gees paddles felt like an extension of my arms and I couldn't imagine changing to one of these new odd-looking curly things. I thought I'd never adapt to a low-twist shaft; those bent shafts just looked crazy, and switching to composite construction was unthinkable. After all, back in the day a hot paddler had a wooden stick; fiberglass was for hackers. Then, I ran into an old paddling pal on the Potomac, one who had been paddling longer and at a higher level than I had ever done. This owner of a whitewater training school recommended a low-twist shaft to help mitigate my increasingly annoying arthritis. Soon after, I spoke with another fellow geezer on the Gauley who recommended a bent shaft for the same reason. I was wavering. When I spotted on Boater Talk's Gear Swap a left-control, bent shaft carbon composite paddle, brand new and for a bargain price,



I succumbed. I can't say for sure that it has helped the arthritis, as the problem comes and goes according to its own mysterious agenda, but the paddle feels great.

There isn't as much science to discuss in the realm of paddles as there is in boats. Paddle preference is still primarily visceral. None of the problems I anticipated with changing the twist angle or the weird looking shaft has come to pass. If you haven't tried one of the funny looking paddles, you owe it to yourself to check it out. I predict that in about an hour of paddling you'll feel like it's all you've ever used. I haven't given up on the wood part, though. I'm still convinced that wooden paddles are more durable and have a better feel than composite. My new bent-shaft, 30-degree, wooden Backlund is the stick of a lifetime.

## Helmets

Helmets have always been difficult for whitewater sports, and they continue to be so today. Just as with paddles, helmets have not been the subject of as much research and study as boats, probably because they don't offer the same financial incentives as an item with a larger price tag. Also, the demands placed on a whitewater helmet are severe. They must be comfortable and light, but withstand repeated exposure to sun and water. They must be cool in summer and warm in winter. Most importantly, they must absorb the energy of an impact with rock and disperse that energy in a way that doesn't cause brain or spinal injury. And they must do all of this while looking cool. In years past most helmets worn in whitewater were adapted from other sports, particularly from motorcycling and hockey. There are now a plethora of helmets available

made especially for whitewater paddling, but the criteria for choosing among them are lacking. In short, there is no consensus about what makes a good, safe paddling helmet and hyperbole abounds. So, choosing a helmet today is pretty much a crap shoot. I've tried a half dozen new ones in the last couple of years, but I keep going back to my 35-year-old Bell motorcycle helmet. If you're looking to buy a new one, I can only advise that you go for safety and comfort, not for looks or popularity, and be prepared to spend quite a bit of time customizing the liner to achieve a good fit. I'm sure there are good ones out there, but a helmet is so critical, and information on their performance is in such short supply, I haven't a clue how to make a good decision. The hunt for the baddest chapeau continues.

## Clothing

As with my paddles, until recently I hadn't gotten a new piece of paddling clothing in years. This was a serious mistake. The new paddling clothing is fantastic.

Back in the day, we wore wet suits and wool sweaters through the winter months and were quite safe and reasonably comfortable. Wetsuits work by allowing a thin layer of water in and trapping and warming it against your skin. This meant that your first immersion was a shocker, something to be either avoided if possible, or with sufficient moral courage, shortcut by doing a roll at the beginning of the trip. The advent of the dry suit, however, has been a revolution in cold weather paddling, one that I eschewed for years out of sheer stubbornness. A dry suit sounds horrible in principle: a rubber gasket around your neck so tight that it seals out water. Who could wear such a thing? It turns out, though, that the gaskets don't need to be very tight to form a good seal and they are no more irritating, with proper adjustment, than wearing a turtle-neck sweater. The effect of this new piece of equipment has been to make winter paddling a much more reasonable exercise. Winter paddling is primarily a mental exercise, a battle between the inertia keeping us inside and warm, versus our knowledge that, once we get out there, we can actually be quite comfortable. With dry-gear of the appropriate kind much of the inertia associated with winter paddling is removed, and we can paddle year-round again with few second thoughts. With a suitable insulating layer underneath a dry

# A Geezer's Guide

top or dry suit it is possible to paddle and play for hours in water barely above freezing while staying warm and dry. In extreme conditions you can add a neoprene hood and gloves or pogies to create virtually impervious armor for the winter paddler. It still takes a mental kick to leave the house when the icicles form, but it's much easier than it once was.

## Miscellaneous gear

One of the non-essential but fun developments of the last few years is the advent of waterproof electronic gear. The ability to take photos without stopping to take out a waterproof bag or case from the boat, take out a camera or camcorder, get your shot, then reverse the procedure has been a holy grail for decades. Back in the day I had a Nikonos diving camera rigged up on a chest harness for such a purpose, but it was a clumsy set-up at best. Now, I carry a waterproof digital camera about the size of a deck of playing cards in my PFD pocket. The image quality of these cameras still isn't quite up to the standard of film cameras or digital SLRs, but the convenience and small size make them a no-brainer trade-off for everything but photos intended for publication in paper media. They even create small videos. Most importantly, having a camera immediately available is often the difference between getting the cool shot and missing it completely. If you're a whitewater paddling photo enthusiast you should check out one of these modern miracles.

Finally, the most frivolous of all modern paddling gear: the waterproof MP3 player. I know, I know. We go out to the rivers to get away from modern noise and re-establish our connection with nature. But admit it, when you're out at your local park and play spot all alone (yes, being a geezer probably means you paddle alone a lot, but that's another story), trying to nail down that tricky Space Godzilla or Phonix Monkey you just learned, wouldn't it be cool to have Led Zeppelin, or Hendrix, or the Beatles (fill in your choice) blasting away to give you that gung-ho edge? Don't knock it until you've tried it.

A final thought. You don't, of course, actually need any of this stuff. If you're still satisfied with your neoprene and wool, your glass 69 Prijon Special, your Norse paddle, by all means stick with them. Despite all the new stuff, the river is still the point of the whole exercise, and the river hasn't changed in all these years. But, there are some new ways to have fun out there and you should give them a shot. No matter what your age or how many years you've been paddling, the real adventure is in learning. If you're still paddling when most of your contemporaries are playing golf in Florida, you still have the heart of a warrior. Trying out some of the stuff above will help you remain an INDY paddler. INDY is the battle cry of the geezer boater. At the takeout we stand together and sound our barbaric yalp to the world: "I'm Not Dead Yet!" 

*The author today.*



One of the biggest obstacles to the veteran paddler who wants to learn something about the new paddling may be the ego. If you've been paddling for decades, it's not easy to line up at the beginner's play hole with the pimply-faced teenagers. Especially when the teenagers, naturally, make you look like a complete klutz. There are a number of ways to deal with this.

First, you can play the grizzled veteran card. Loudly tell old war stories to everyone within hearing range about how rough things were in the old days and how paddlers had to be tougher than they are today. Young paddlers love being informed how insignificant their current accomplishments are compared to the Golden Age of Paddling. This approach is guaranteed to give you plenty of free time to work on your technique undisturbed, free of idle chitchat with your fellow paddlers.

Another approach is to try to become cool. Try this: hold out your hand, palm toward you. Fold the second and third fingers down and lay the thumb over them. Hold this sign up in front of your chest and shake it gently. The hand sign is gangsta for "Fire it up!" Using both hands makes it even more emphatic, but makes it hard to hold the paddle. If arthritis makes this gesture painful or impossible for you, go straight for the linguistic cool. Learn the lingo. For example, work on calling anything good "sick." Follow up any declarative statement with the exclamatory "Fo' shizzle!" For instance you might say: "Dude, that pop-up I nailed was sick, brah! Fo' shizzle!" Nothing says "cool" like an overweight bald guy trying to act like a teenager. This approach will encourage conviviality in your new peer group, as your compatriots share a hearty laugh together. Especially when you're not looking.

If neither of those two works, you can always fall back on open-mindedness and a joyful willingness to learn, even from those younger than us. Distasteful? Sure, but the skillful outdoorsperson always has a backup plan.

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Thomas Roger Moser, Verzasca River, Italy Photo: Tanya Shuman

# Wet n' Wild Creekin'



## The Green Mile

By Jeff West

This past July I heard the words I have dreamed of hearing for many years: “The Tuxedo Hydro Station will be running one unit at 100% capacity from midnight to midnight.” This phone recording meant North Carolina’s Green River was releasing the following day sunrise to sunset (and beyond). This rare occurrence during the summer months was the chance for my friends and I to try our luck at a kayaking goal we had dreamed up years before.

We had the ambitious dream of paddling the Green as many times as possible in a

single day. I am sure a physiatrist would have a field day trying to figure out what drove us to this goal. In fact, I am still not certain today why we wanted to do it—even after the fact. I do know this: my friends and I made the most of our day dropping 5,250 feet. We went as hard as we possibly could and the fun of kayaking never left us during our 14.5-hour marathon.

Jonathan Shanin and Mark Bowman joined me for this monstrous day of paddling. Our wake-up call came at

5:30 in the morning. We had gotten a few hours of sleep in a motel near the put-in. At 5:45 we were geared up and walking down the put-in trail. At 6:04 we slid in the water, barely able to see. At 6:19 I was in the eddy above the notch at Gorilla wondering whose insane idea this was. I stared through the notch reassuring myself, I have made this move many times before. So what if it was just barely daybreak and all I could see were shadows lingering below. A few minutes ago I was comfortably asleep; now I must charge this beast. Gorilla worked out fine that first run

and the notch treated us well throughout the day. My friends and I spent the day paddling, smiling and soul searching. The countless thoughts of past kayaking days filled my head while racing each lap. Amazing memories of long ago creeking trips played like a movie through my day. Completing our first run we arrived at the take-out at 6:50 a.m. We kept up the same pace until 8:30 that night.

So how does one end up paddling the Green from sunrise to sunset? My story starts in 1992. I was trying to do enders at the Ocoee's Hell Hole when a really good boater asked me if I was interested in guiding rafts for the summer. The boater was Marc Lyle and the summer job was there on the Ocoee. Yes, before Marc Lyle designed kayaks for Dagger he managed an Ocoee rafting company. My crazy luck was to meet him one day in an eddy. I told him I might take the job the following summer, but wished to creek with him during the coming winter. I had just bought a Dagger Freefall and was fired up about creek boating. Marc and I became friends and before long he invited me on a creeking trip. Since I had only been kayaking for a year he was concerned, but I assured him my creeking abilities were good to go. My experience at the time was actually limited to floating down a couple of streams in north Georgia. I really had no idea what creek boating was, but assumed a stream and a creek must be the same. I assured Marc I knew how to creek boat and that I was more than ready for a good Class V run. Somehow I talked him into showing me down Bear Creek.

Bear is insanely steep for a first timer, but I made it down unscathed. Marc could tell I had pushed my limits and afterwards asked if it was too much.

"Are you kidding," I replied. "This has been the greatest day of my life!"

I had lucked into finding a great kayaking mentor. Marc took me under his wing and has inspired me ever since. Somehow, I ended up paddling Bear Creek before I knew Baby Falls existed. It's funny what major effects someone's kindness can have on your life.

Back at the job at hand, laps two and three passed speedily and uneventfully. Completing lap number four we found Adam Herzog waiting at the take-out. He was looking for a shuttle and we obliged. Adam is an amazing boater. He is probably in the best health of any kayaker I've met. He cross trains by riding and running. Adam has paddled Linville Gorge multiple times in a day and won the recent Green Endurance Race. This is a mass start head-to-head race which includes kayaking the river and biking back to the put-in. Adam won this past race beating, as an

"Of all the spiritual places kayaking has taken me, Gorilla is at the top of the list. The Notch acts as a doorway or gateway to another world".

individual, the teams who had multiple members to share the different disciplines. Even Adam was a bit surprised to hear we had already completed four laps that morning. Keep in mind it was only 11:00 a.m. when he joined in.

Starting with lap number five I began to fixate on the notch above Gorilla. The entire river is funneled through a gap in the rocks so tight hikers can leap from one side to the other. Running the notch is always a huge challenge for me. After a decade of regularly paddling here I still miss the eddy on the river right below the notch at times and have to run the flume direct. The feeling of missing the eddy is always such a surprise. The first thought passing in your mind is "How did I miss that?" Then your heart races as you realize you are about a half second from going over the main drop. Frantically, you straighten your boat and aim for the

launch pad. The entire experience is over, regardless of the quality of your line, in a few seconds.

When you are eddied above the notch on the river left you stare over your left shoulder at the move. You see the river right eddy surging below. You know how terrifying the undercut is on the right at the base of the notch. You know that it is possible to flip and run the main drop upside down. Thoughts of getting turned backwards and going over the main drop stern first add to the stress. But, you focus on catching the eddy below the notch and drive to that goal. Of all the spiritual places kayaking has taken me, Gorilla is at the top of the list. The notch acts as a doorway or gateway to another world. It may only be a rapid, but to me it is one of the perfect places in kayaking. You focus on the move and if it doesn't work out as planned you have about a second to fix whatever craziness you and your kayak are caught up in before dropping the main falls.

Running this rapid always reminds me of the first time I fired it up on a hot summer day 12 years ago. I couldn't stop smiling for a week afterwards. The notch is the test and the main drop is your reward or punishment. After hundreds of runs I have only screwed it up four times. Three times I ran the main drop backwards and once upside down. All screw ups were in a 12-foot kayak running direct (without aiming for the eddy), practicing for the Green race. Funny how the many good lines blend together, but the four bad ones still play out vividly in slow motion in my mind. Thankfully, I have never been hurt here. The notch reminds me how fortunate we are. I often think of the amazing kayakers who have passed between those narrow gate rocks, all with clear focus and full of heart, all of them firing it up with determined intensity. I'll certainly never take Gorilla lightly; it still energizes me as much today as it did my first time, 12 summers ago.

Lap number five complete, I text messaged my girlfriend on the shuttle drive back to the top, "Five down, FIVE to go!" The day is starting to seem possible. We definitely will have daylight for ten runs, but will

# Wet n' Wild Creekin'

our energy last? Will the release continue as scheduled? A broken boat or injury will end this challenge and we are definitely not as strong now as we were during the first laps. The time is 1:20 p.m. and we are launching on lap number six. Jonathan, Mark and I cruise downstream. The Green has a nice class II-III warm-up section before Frankenstein.

As usual, we found our rhythm and were ready to race after the Bride. These guys are great to boat with. We kept the boats in the current leap frogging for safety through the tough rapids. The only eddies we have time for are at Gorilla and Sunshine. The rest of the run flows together as one long rapid. Jonathan is determined to fire up Gorilla each run and has smooth lines each time. Bowman chooses to walk on occasion. He has nothing to prove and only runs the big ones when his heart is fully committed. His strategy is smart and his lines show it. Lap number six turned out to be our fastest: 39 minutes from put-in to take-out.

Lap seven was a tough one. I was tiring. The day was wearing me out and my lines showed it. I flipped in Go Left, flipped at Speedtrap and barely cleared the rock at Sunshine. Carrying to the car at the take-out my legs were killing me. The put-in hike is less than a mile and all downhill, but carrying a kayak seven times with wet, sandy river shorts had seriously chaffed the back of my legs. I could barely take a step without cringing. My buddies were giving me crap. Was it time to call it a day? Nope, it was time for Red Bull and Vitamin I (Ibuprofen).

Revived at the put-in, we found ourselves ahead of schedule. We actually had daylight for 11 full runs if we wanted and decided

to take a break for a few. Maybe ten laps would actually happen! Feeling stronger I knew I had to do something about my river shorts. No one had a spare pair and I was not going to be turned back due to chaffing. Mark and Jonathan grabbed their gear and started walking towards lap number eight. My legs were killing me. I could not fathom another hike to the put-in wearing these shorts. What to do????

Yes, the shorts stayed in the car. Besides, I had a sprayskirt on; no one would see me. No one would know, right?

Lap number eight was smooth and lap number nine was actually our best of the day. The three of us were paddling extremely well for number nine. Arriving at Go Left we were only a few feet apart from one another. Mark lead with a left angle. Jonathan and I immediately knew he was going left. As Mark committed left Jon committed to the river right line. This gave Mark enough of a head start for me to follow him left. The three of us cleaned the rapid and were through the entire

drop and gone in ten seconds. A crowd of paddlers scouting from shore gave us a big yelp to encourage us downstream. I have no idea where this surge of energy came from, but I felt like it was my second run of the day, not my ninth. We hit the take-out with our fastest run of the day and felt invincible riding back to the top for number 10.

Walking down the trail our tenth time I realized I had forgotten to eat a powerbar during shuttle. I was so amped on completing nine runs that I had spaced it. By the time we entered Gorilla for run number 10, I was out of juice. I sat in the river left eddy above the notch for a moment focusing. I had to turn my growling stomach into the desire to make this move. A moment later I was safely in the river right eddy below the notch. I couldn't believe I had safely navigated the notch ten times today. Dropping the flume was as sweet as ever. Cruising down to Sunshine I knew what a huge challenge we had left. One major rapid stood between

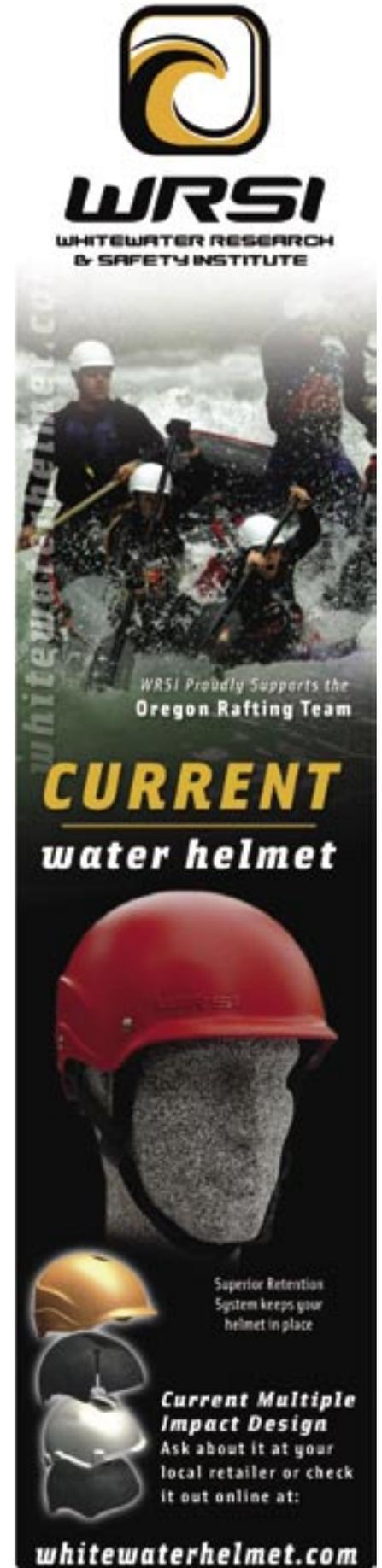


*Jonathan Shanin lines it up and knocks it out at the Gorilla's Notch*

photo by Jeff West

our goal and us, one last huge boof. I caught the river left eddy above the final move at sunshine and tried to relax a bit. I had flung myself off of this monster nine times so far today and pulled deep for one last good line. I could see the large crew we passed earlier enjoying the big rock below the rapid. Great, an audience. I was tired and really wanted to finish this day with just my friends, not with 20 spectators watching. I went for the move. As I flew off the boof I knew I had made it. Landing in front of the cave in the pool below I celebrated a second too early. The landing blew my skirt! I made it to shore as my kayak filled with water. I stepped out and hauled my boat up to drain it. Then I heard all the yelps. Oh yea, no shorts on at the moment! The crowd got a nice view of my pale behind. The last thing that group expected was to be mooned at Sunshine. Even with the embarrassing exposure, paddling to the take-out felt great. We had completed 10 runs on the Narrows of the Green in a single day.

We completed our feat at 8:30 that evening. Amazingly, we still felt strong. There was even time for another run before the sun set. It took about two seconds for us to consider and then we all agreed no-way. We were happy to stop at 10 for the day. Plus, our shuttle driver Mason had a hot date in Tennessee and we had to get him home. In the end we managed ten runs with no wipeouts. We each flipped a few times, but stayed safe during our Green marathon. Jonathan ran Gorilla all ten times and I Tripled Crowned all ten runs. The day was amazing. Of all places, Hammer Factor, an easy rapid at the end, actually gave our group the most trouble. That final rapid keeps you humble. I enjoyed the day for a million reasons, but most of all it allowed me to reflect on fourteen years of creek boating. The day reminded me that kayaking is such an amazing gift and we should each take time to share our skills with others. I am so very thankful for bumping into Marc Lyle in that eddy long ago. 

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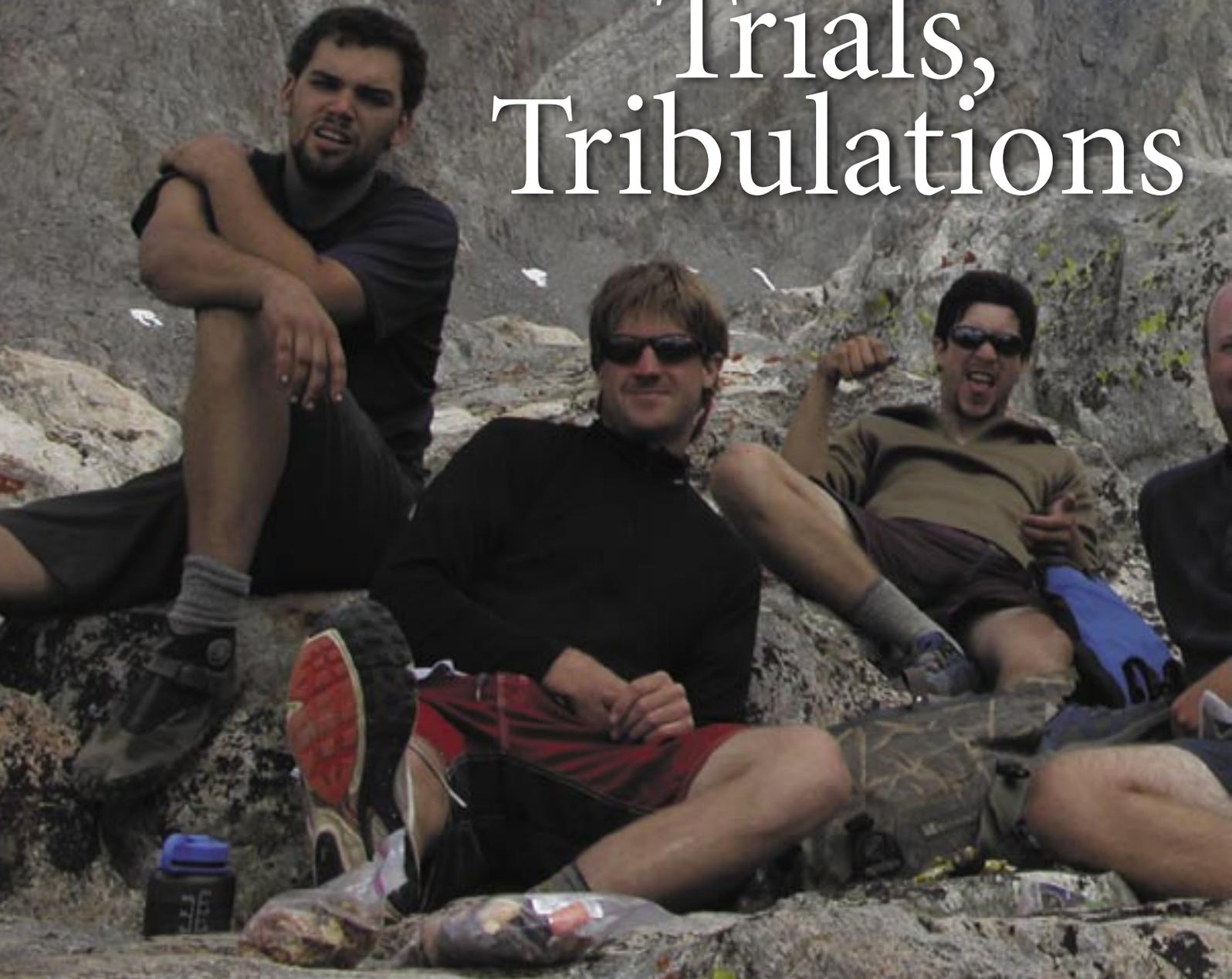
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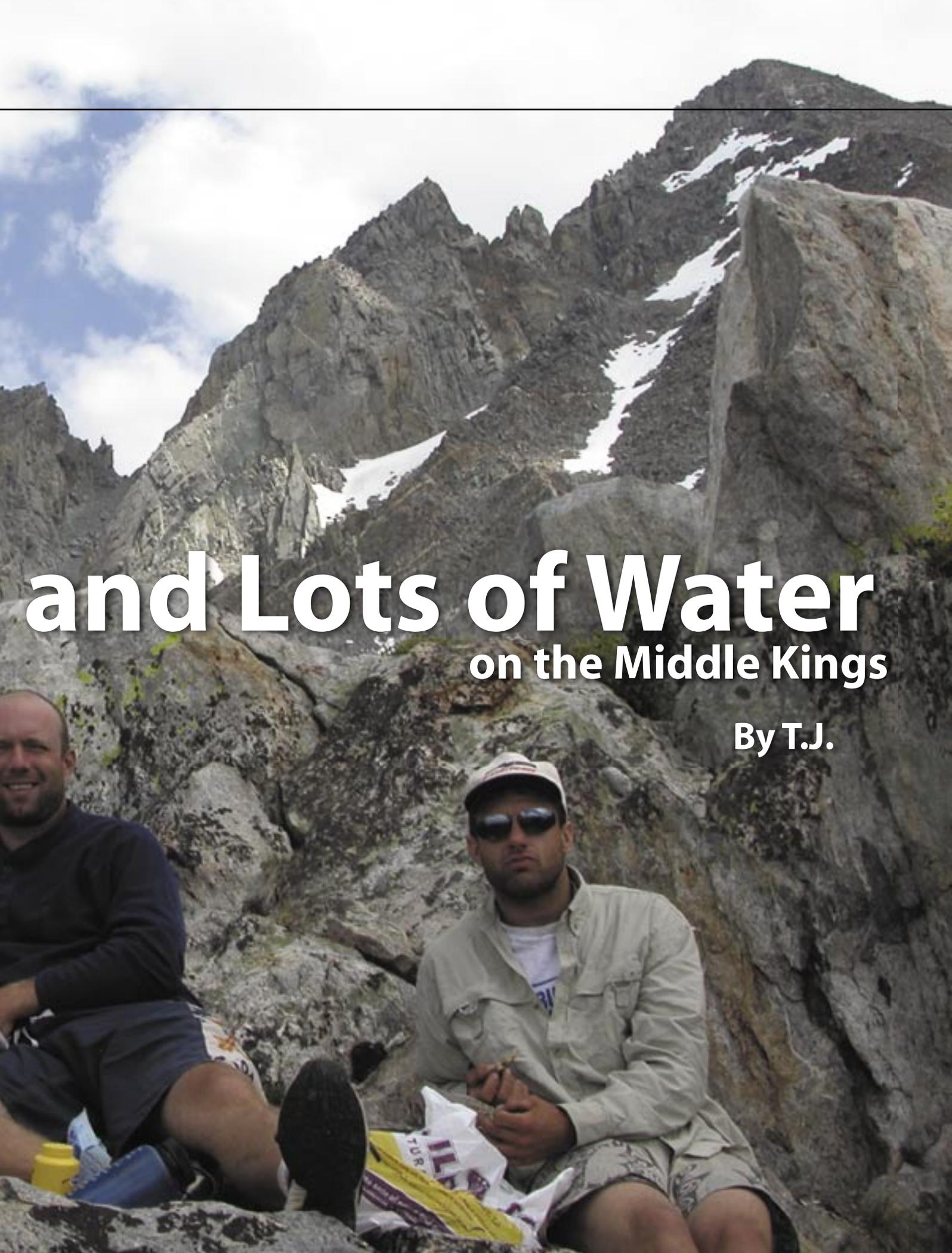
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# Wet n' Wild Creekin'

## Trials, Tribulations





# and Lots of Water

on the Middle Kings

By T.J.

# Middle Kings

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*Beasts of Burden.*

In the porcelain tub, the soapy ocean is calm and warm. A royal blue kayak emerges from the depths, riding in the small hand of a six-year-old boy. The wind begins to blow and the waves grow larger as the little kayak is tossed to and fro in the cloudy water. Lightning and thunder roar as the waves begin to top the upper limits of the sea-bath and splash over onto the freshly mopped tile floor. It doesn't look good for the little kayaker. He has been lost for days and is about to meet his demise at the end of my scrub down. He flips and his roll fails him. Water rushes in, the kayak sinks and disappears into the depths of Davie Jones' locker.

"Bath time is over Bub! Hop out and let me dry you off," Mother says as she pulls the curtain aside and pulls the plug on my murky seas.

The water level inches down and I stare at the amazing little cyclone forming above

the drain, wondering what it would be like to be two inches tall and riding that water spiral to the unknowns of our household plumbing. The final drops of water disappear with a gurgle and I grab my little blue toy and step out of the tub and into the warm dry towel between my mother's arms. The little kayak is my favorite. Together we have traveled to distant lands and paddled mystic waterfalls.

Some things never change, and as I sit here recalling the dreams of my youth, I realize how soon in life I became a kayaker. From playing in the garden hose, building snaking rivers and pebble dams, to the day I turned 15 and bought my first whitewater kayak, it was all a series of stepping-stones. Any paddler will tell you that to progress in whitewater one must set goals and attain them through persistence and hard work. It is the personal challenge that drives us to the next river, and there is nothing like the feeling of achievement when you look upstream and see the white froth that only a moment earlier was your greatest nemesis. And so it comes as no surprise that as we sit in his living room guzzling cold beer and comparing safety gear that all Captain Ralph and I are thinking of is our next kayaking adventure.

It is late in the 2004 calendar year that Ralph and I decide to shoot for the Middle Kings. Maybe it is the seven-river expedition blog, the reoccurring dreams featuring Roger Rabbit and his tooth-grinding, goofball band, or maybe it's just time to put our cowboy river running skills to the ultimate test. Any way, the Middle Fork becomes the focus of our day dreaming river obsessions, and as the months pass by we spend our "extra" hours at work thinking through logistics, watching the snowfall in the Sierras, and trying to find ways to make this thing happen. It does not take much convincing to get the crew on board; Kris Pistopherson, Beryllium Tubes, The Broiler, Third Eichhorn, Captain Ralph, and I were all interested in this 10-day-maximum-one-shot at the Middle Fork of the Kings. With Ralph behind the logistics helm, we arrange to have our boats

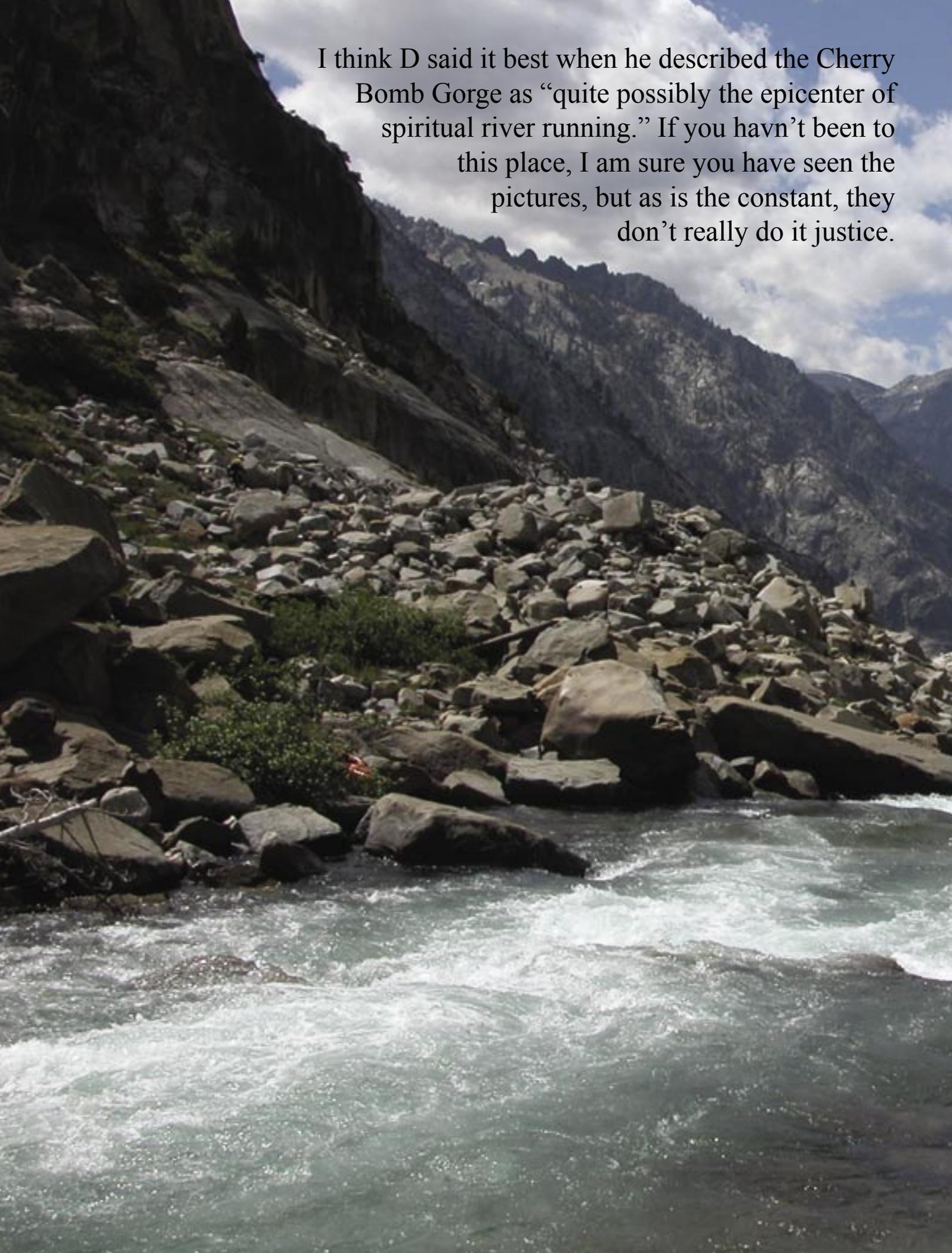
shipped out early to avoid any problems on the day of departure, and recruit our only western crewmember, Goodwin, to meet us with a second shuttle vehicle. The stage is set, and it is now a waiting game to see when the water levels will come in.

We wait, speculate, correlate, and then dance a jig and wait some more, and at the end of May decide to shoot for the second week in July. Yet, snow continues to fall on the Sierras. So we push our target date back and buy some plane tickets. At this point the Rogers Crossing gage is still through the roof and showing no signs of giving, but neither does Kris' job. We are going to California but unsure of what we will paddle. The snow pack is dwindling, but the water is still ridiculously high. Maybe the late summer, record heat will zap the remaining snow and drop the river into a high side of runnable level, but it doesn't seem likely. Our friends across Appalachia laugh at our plan. The team's hopes of hitting the Kings this year all but crash into the side of the proverbial mountain. We gather beta and gear and pack as if we will spend six days in the woods, but as we speak to our western counterparts it seems Upper Cherry Creek will be our best bet; it is going to take a miracle to bring the Kings down.

July 20 rolls around, and since I am flying with Delta and leaving a bit earlier, I head for Atlanta with Eichhorn (who jumps on board a little late and has to fly with his kayak) around 10 in the morning; there's plenty of time to make it for my 1:30 flight. Thanks to the previous night's head banging bon voyage bash, we get lost on the way and show up a little late and a little fuzzy. I miss my flight. After walking around in circles cursing, I find the rebooking booth and get on another flight a few hours later. At this point, the rest of the crew is piling into a limousine, drinking 30-year-old scotch and firing up Cohibas compliments of the Knights of the Templar. Smashing.

Dallas-Fort Worth, Salt Lake City, peanuts, pretzels, and a five-dollar beer later I am sitting on my bags in the Reno airport. A few hours later I finally see the rest of

I think D said it best when he described the Cherry Bomb Gorge as “quite possibly the epicenter of spiritual river running.” If you haven’t been to this place, I am sure you have seen the pictures, but as is the constant, they don’t really do it justice.



No where to go but down.



# Middle Kings

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the crew round the corner. Turns out I wasn't the only one who had some trouble along the way. A nearly missed flight in Minneapolis means that half of everyone's bags are somewhere between here and there. We report the lost bags and grab a couple of taxis to our complimentary rooms at the Peppermill Casino.

Needing to unwind after a long day of plane chasing, everyone but The Broiler hits the casino floor for a cold beer and a game of blackjack. It only takes five hands and twenty bucks for Eichhorn, Ralph, Kris, and I to accept defeat and we head back up to the room for some shuteye, leaving Tubes to hold his own at the blackjack table.

I awake the next morning just as Tubes is coming in from an all-night blackjack epic. He tells a drunken story of roller coaster proportions: five hundred up, feeling good, the sun already rising, but there are no windows in this place so how should he know. He goes one more round, and has suffered a final all-in, double-your-money defeat only fifteen minutes earlier.

Eager to get out of town, Ralph and I head to the airport to get the rental car and search for the missing bags. A proper goose chase later, we find the lost bags and head back to the Peppermill to rally the troops. Piling into the Dodge truck, we head for the Reno whitewater park where we will drop four people off, pack all the gear in the backseat of the truck, send two people to pick up the boats, and wait for Goodwin, the driver of our crucial, second shuttle vehicle.

An afternoon in the Truckee Whitewater Park proves quite stimulating, and by the time Godwin arrives we are all ready to be on our way.

We finally hit the highway outta town and cross the border into sunny California just after midnight. With help from some local heroes, we decide to head straight to the much talked about Upper Cherry Creek. Some fellow Tennesseans had done the West Fork earlier that week and said it was good. By our calculations, Upper Cherry

should be coming in perfectly. We drive until everyone's eyelids are made of lead, pull over to the side of the highway and crash right there in the gravel pull-off.

The logging trucks barreling down the hill signal that we have, again, slept too late. We rouse the troops quickly and pick up a quick cup of Joe at one of the many espresso shops that litter highways west of the Mississippi. We make it to Cherry Lake around noon and get our permits. We are the last group of the season to go into the gorge with any hope of having some real water to speak of and the first group to get a permit. With the permit comes a list of rules to abide by while in the gorge. Being loud and rowdy southern gentlemen, our favorite is NO HOOPING AND HOLLERING!

I think D said it best when he described the cherry bomb gorge as "quite possibly the epicenter of spiritual river running." If you haven't been to this place, I am sure you have seen the pictures, but as is the constant, they don't really do it justice. Our three-day adventure here was an epic in itself, and I do not have the space to go into the details here. Let me summarize in three sentences: Eichhorn was a no show at the put-in. Godwin is lucky to be alive. Fuzzy endured the most hardcore beat down I have ever seen. But I digress....

As we made our way over the last few horizon lines and into the big blue lake, we were all in awe that such a perfect place to kayak could even exist. After a thorough safety debriefing we headed across the two-mile lake paddle as dusk set in. Upon arriving at the boat ramp on the other side we were greeted by none other than Third Eichhorn, patiently waiting with the suburban. He had taken the trail to Kibbie Lake, hiked an extra eight miles and spent the night by himself in the mosquito hell near the top of the ridge before giving up and heading back to the car.

We camped on the lake, built a bonfire, and recounted the past three days' adventures as the bottles are passed around.

We awake the next morning with stiff hangers, sore muscles, and ravenous

hunger. The other boaters in the area are headed to Cherry Creek "proper," but we decide to drive into Groveland, get some breakfast "proper" and check levels at the library to see where our next destination will be. The word on the street is that everything is too low, except maybe Hell's Kitchen, and even that is questionable.

As we wait for the library to open The Broiler says, "Three years ago, when we did West Cherry, Upper Cherry Creek, and The Middle Fork of the Kings in succession, the level on Cherry was higher than it is right now. We headed straight for the Middle Kings after we took off Upper Cherry. It seems we might be in the same position."

This gives everyone a new, and scary sense of hope. We just barely have enough time to squeeze it in if the levels come in perfectly.

"After checking the levels, I am not sure it is going to drop, like many of the optimists in the group predict," Captain Ralph says to Kris after we have mooched the library's internet. "Everyone at home thinks we are crazy, but if we set out to traverse the Sierras this summer we should go for it. Why should we let a few gut feelings that this might be a bad idea and some concern over spending an extra night out in the woods stop us?"

"Ralph, all the planets are coming into alignment perfectly. We have to go," Kris replies, and Tubes adds his two cents: "She's staring us in the face. This is what we came out here for. We have to do it."

The sweet taste of Cherry still lingers on everyone's palates, and the Middle Fork Kings at Rogers Crossing is at 2000 and dropping 200 cfs per day. If it continues to fall at the current rate, and we start hiking tomorrow, we will be in the crux three days from now at a high but runnable level.

Godwin immediately backs out with excuses that his twin sister is awaiting his presence at the birth of her first child, but he agrees to help us with the shuttle. Unbeknownst to him, he has just agreed to drive us eight hours through the night on

*A long way from water.*



# Middle Kings

one of the longest and most complicated shuttles in the lower 48 states. We pile in the cars and head for Yucca Point, the confluence of the Middle and South Fork Kings, and our take-out. We make it there just before dark and catch our first glimpse of the intimidating canyon that holds the “last nine” and some of the hardest whitewater in California.

Since Godwin will simply be dropping us at the trailhead to the put-in the next morning, we gather only what we will need on the river and suit up in our boardies and polypro. We stuff Godwin’s

suburban to the brim and begin our all-night trip around the Sierras.

Trying to sleep in a car that is fully loaded really sucks, unless you’re Beryllium Tubes and refuse to move your butt out of the front seat, even to take a turn driving. I get shoved into the very back on top of all the gear with The Broiler. After a little rearranging, I manage to find a way to lie down and actually fall asleep. I awake in the Mojave Desert at daybreak and take the last shift of driving through Bishop, up to the South Lake trailhead and the Rainbow Pack Station, where our mules await us.

When we arrive, we quickly unload and Godwin takes off for Oregon. I think he

is a little ticked that we told him the drive would be four or five hours when it was really eight. The dust trail he leaves behind settles on our minds with the weight of knowing we are now locked in. Captain checks the levels from a phone at the pack station in an attempt to comfort his own gut feeling that this is a bad idea, but it doesn’t matter any more. The only car is at the take-out and the only way to get there is through the canyon. We all pull our sleeping bags out and try and get a little nap before starting our 12-mile hike up and over 12,000-foot Bishop Pass.

The manager of the pack station wakes us an hour later and we begin our brutal hike to the top. We make it to the pass about the same time as the mules. I guess it is around 2:00 pm, judging by the sun.

---

*Steak and taters, classic Middle Kings fare.*



We stop for some fresh spring water and a little lunch. The view from the top is a little overwhelming. I try to ignore the feeling of heavy commitment as I watch the mules disappear down the pass, the way we've come. It is mighty hot and the sun is burning us alive, so we pack our boats and head across the last snowfield and down into Dusy Basin, now carrying our boats and all of our gear. We pass many backpackers and hikers. Some look on with awe, others praise our manliness and a few look on with disgust, and ask if we are crazy.

By this time, I have arranged a pretty good carrying system and I am able to pull ahead and make good time down to "the brink." This is the edge of Dusy Basin and the beginning of the descent into Le Conte Canyon and the Middle Kings. I absorb the amazing view while smacking mosquitoes and waiting for everyone else to catch up. After the group reassembles, we agree that our knees need a rest before the last few miles of downhill and we make camp within sight of the river, thousands of feet below.

Our spirits are as high as our elevation as we fill our stomachs with as much as the altitude will allow us. I rest a bit

uneasily staring at the moon all night in anticipation of the next day.

I sleep through the first few hours of light, and finally get up as the sun crests the stout peaks to our east. I notice some big puffy clouds in the same direction, but make no mention of it. We breakfast slowly, feeling the miles of the day before in our backs and knees. One more time, we shoulder our burdens and head down the steep, final miles into the Kings.

We find the river by early afternoon, quickly gear up to avoid the mosquitoes and slide our boats into the water. The Broiler inspects the river for a moment and says, "The water doesn't look low. I don't think we want any more water, but this seems like it should be fine."

It feels good to be floating finally after so much hiking, and no one pays much attention to the ever-darkening skies.

Bumpy Class II/III leads us into a couple of slide drops that are choked with wood. We easily make our way around them following the Muir trail on river left. We bump into a few more hikers as the first few raindrops fall.

"So how far are you guys going," asks one of the hikers.

"Ohhh, about thirty miles in four days. Have you heard any kind of weather report," I ask, probably starting to sound a little worried.

"Yeah, the ranger we talked to a few miles back said thunder storms are in store for the next three days, and that a big one was already brewing for this afternoon."

"Really? Thanks," I say with a hint of sarcasm as I hear the first boom of thunder overhead.

We walk a few more manky, wood-filled slides and paddle into a lush, green meadow. The river feels like a winding snake moving calmly and slowly, deeper into the mountains, a sharp contrast to the deteriorating weather conditions. The sky quickly turns solid black, and the lighting reminds me of a scene from *The Lord of the Rings*. The clouds dump raindrops the size of elk pellets, and the silence between lightning strikes and thunder rolls all but fizzles away. Our canopy continues to crack with lightning and we begin to understand what this might do to our water level.



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# Middle Kings

“Damn this rain,” Tubes yells as it continues to fall in sheets.

“It won’t do this all night. This has got to be just a little afternoon shower,” I say, fully aware that this is no ordinary afternoon shower.

We float there in silence watching the lightning bolts hit the peaks just downstream of our position, glad that we are, at least, in the lowest spot around.

About this time a Boy Scout troop was struck by lightning only 25 miles away. They were camped at the foot of Mt. Whitney. We were looking at the same storm that zapped them. And even though we were in the lowest possible spot it still didn’t really seem safe, floating in the water and all.

The storm had already killed by the time it threatened our lives with high water and commitment in that canyon. What were we to do? I gave some thought to turning around, but it seemed so pointless. We’d have to hike back over the pass, give up on the Kings ... and then what would we do? There was no way out from Bishop and we would be on the wrong side of the Sierras with no transportation. The only logical way out was downstream.

Our meadow begins to drop out from under us, and we run a couple beefy Class IV rapids in the rain, until we come to nice 15-foot slide into a small pool. The river splits around an island after this and to the left we catch a glimpse of Palisade Creek, doo-doo brown and three times the flow of the Middle Kings.

“So Palisades is supposed to be about half the flow of the Kings, huh Broiler?”

“Uhhh, from what I can remember. It was maybe a little more than half, but a hell of a lot lower than that,” he answers, pointing to the flooded little gorge. Unable to go any further due to the high water, we are forced to camp just upstream of the confluence on the river right.

The rain finally begins to peter out and we split into two groups, one to catch dinner,

and the other to search for dry wood. We find some shelter under some evergreen trees and break off some of the lower, dryer branches. We use some to provide dry sleeping quarters in case of more rain and the rest to start a fire. Our survival skills prevail and we dry out around the blaze, eating some fresh fish and fine bag meals. We crawl into our pine boughs and fall asleep. We awake the next morning directly above the big stuff. We are now on day two of the river and headed into the Devil’s Washbowl.

The first thing I do after I wake is jump over a couple of rocks to get a look at Palisade Creek. It has changed color from brown to blue, but has only dropped a few inches. It still appears to have a lot more flow than the Middle Kings.

We take our time, and let our gear dry out in the sun that graces us with its presence. I think everyone is hoping that the river is still falling fast. I am starting to think about the hydrographs I studied in college, making biased predictions and assuring myself that it is coming down.

The first rapid of the day is like a quadruple espresso, and we are immediately aware of the higher than normal water level. The water is fast, cold, and pushy. We run a big slide and punch a couple of giant recirculating hydraulics. The scenery is amazing as we make our way to the edge of the earth, but no one has the time to look or care, and the cameras stay in their bags.

Class V that should be IV, Class VI that should be V, and after what seems a small eternity, we finally make it to the Good Morning Slide and the beginning of the first distinct mini-gorge. Broiler, Kris, and Tubes run the slide down to the entrance of the gorge and almost get blown straight into the meat. The Captain and I observe.

“Screw that, man. You can run it, but then you are going to have to hike back out of the gorge 25 yards later,” the Captain says as he shoulders the old plastic burden and heads for the trail.

I silently agree and do the same. The trail

goes high above the first gorge, blasted into the granite nearly a century ago.

We begin to drop back down and cross a creek that falls in right at the bottom of the biggest slide, the end of the first gorge, and “the best rapid,” according to The Broiler. Crossing this tributary proves to be a small triumph due to the thigh deep flows, and I stare down it and think about how much it would suck to be swept away by this small, swollen tributary that probably isn’t even on the map.

We get back down to river level and decide to wait. I half expect them to come bombing down the slide, having just completed an impossibly high descent of the Good Morning Gorge, but a few moments later, I see their kayaks high above on the trail, slowly moving toward us.

When they arrive we eat some lunch and talk about what to do.

“It’s just too damn high, man,” Kris says as he watches the eddies surge back into terminal holes. “No one would survive this.”

“You wouldn’t even be able to get out anywhere. And in the unfortunate case that you did swim,” his voice trails off as he turns and looks downstream at the continuous Class VI froth falling off horizon line after horizon line. “No way man, no freaking way.”

We have no other choice but to hike down to Simpson Meadow.

Everyone is putting together their carrying systems while The Broiler jumps ahead and gets way out in front, making really good time. The last thing he says is, “As soon as I see navigable whitewater, I’m putting on.”

Tubes gets his backpack together first and leaves on the heels of The Broiler.

We all feel the same way: sweaty, swearing, and tired of walking. A mere Class V rapid would be a welcoming sight for everyone. Again, I blank my mind, tuck my head,

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# Middle Kings

and start walking. Occasionally I look to my right and see terminal hole after terminal hole stacked up like bricks in a wall, one after another. I lose all sense of time for a while until I notice a change in the topography around the trail. It seems like the gradient is finally letting up. I turn a corner and find Tubes with his kayak on the ground packing away his backpack.

“Let’s put on,” he says.

At this point, I don’t even care if it is Class VI. Anything will be better than taking one more step with this giant burden on my back, and I agree before he even has a chance to finish.

“Do you think The Broiler already put on,” I ask as I peer down the trail trying to find some sign of him or his kayak.

“Probably, but if not I’m sure we’ll see

him around the corner. The trail should follow the river all the way through the meadow.”

Beryllium Tubes’ convincing is all I or anyone else needs, and as the rest of the crew trickles in, we put on our gear and head down to the river. We put in on some fast, Class III/IV boogy water—it’s really moving. As we proceed through the meadow, we become spread out further and further. Periodically I scan the left bank looking for signs of The Broiler, and see nothing. I keep telling myself we will run into him just around the next corner.

A blanket of darkness is beginning to creep down overhead, and we still haven’t found The Broiler, or a good spot to camp for that matter. We stop and check out a couple of possible sites, but they are so mosquito-ridden that we saddle up and head downstream hoping to find

something a little better. Finally, in the last few moments of light we come to a 10-foot high eroded bank with some flat ground, a fire ring and tons of dry wood just above it. We pull over, unpack and build a huge fire to signal The Broiler, just in case he is within sight. We scramble down to the river and make a little stick gauge. Kris dubs our camp “Cliffhanger” because of its precarious position overlooking the river, and we sit around wondering how we are, for the second time on this California journey, one man down.

We move through the next morning at a snail’s pace. The skies are clear, but the stick gauge shows no change in the river level, and there is still no sign of The Broiler. Kris wakes with a feeling that he is still in front of us, so we pack it up and paddle downstream until we have entered the first gorge of the day and some water that The Broiler definitely wouldn’t have



paddled by himself.

Kris and The Captain decide to hike up and look for the trail, while Tubes, Third Eichhorn and I wait. They hike way up the side of a ridge looking for some fabled ranger station that The Captain thought he remembered from his maps (which were conveniently stored in Chattanooga). Kris finally convinces him to turn around. They head back down the ridge and then turn upstream, hike through some desert, the meadow, and past all the stuff we paddled the evening before; still no sign of The Broiler. They turn around and make their way back, empty handed and out of ideas.

Along the way they meet a hiker who is looking for a way to cross the river and head south towards Tehipite Valley. Kris informs him that there is no way to cross the river unless you head way back

upstream and then bushwhack all the way back down the river right, which is most likely impossible. The hiker says he has seen The Broiler and graciously shows his map to Kris and The Captain. They determined that there are 21 miles of river to go and the only way out is downstream. The hiker expresses some concern for them, seeing that they are in the middle of nowhere with nothing but a pair of water bottles, but they thank him and head their separate ways.

Meanwhile, at the entrance to the first gorge, Third Eichhorn keeps watch for The Broiler while Tubes finds some respite in the shade and saws away at his sleep debt. Unable to rest, I pull out the fishing pole and do some of the best fishing of the trip. I am making my way upstream to a perfectly deep, clear eddy, where I can see some monster trout lurking. I crawl down to a little perch and toss my line in the

water. Almost immediately, I feel the tug of a bite, but the sound of Third Eichhorn hollering on a boulder high above distracts me. He has spotted The Broiler coming downstream. In a few moments he comes around the corner yelling at me, "What in the hell? Where were you guys?"

I point him toward our boats just downstream, and run through the woods to meet him. Turns out he camped the night before near the beginning of the meadow right on the trail, waiting for us to come walking up. Had we walked another hundred yards before putting on, we would have never lost him.

The Captain and Kris are still hiking around looking for him at this point, so I tell him of the fishing, and we explore the eddies downstream, pulling out the largest trout of the trip from a shallow little pool right next to the bank.

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# Middle Kings

After another hour of fishing, The Captain and Kris return to find everyone, including The Broiler, now waiting for them. It is 2 pm and we are just starting the longest push, mileage wise, of the entire trip. Eleven miles of whitewater lay between our current position and Tehipite Valley.

We waste no time and begin bombing down some quality “high water West Prong” stuff. Our time concern lights a fire under us, and we don’t get out to portage or scout much at all. We explore the many side channels that have opened up due to the higher-than-recommended flow, and sneak around some of the more deadly hydraulics this way. When there is no other option, we blaze the trail and hope for the best, following the bobbing head of he whose turn it is to lead.

We portage Big Bad Beaver, wondering what The Tsunami was thinking as we stare at the massive eight-foot pile on the hole at the bottom, get back on the river, and push on till dusk. The lust for some flat camping pushes us onward. Tehipite Valley should be just around the bend, but the last drops of light escape us and we are forced to camp above another horizon line in a sandy, insect hell-hole that Kris names “Camp Motivation.” He sees the poor camping as a good reason to get up and out the next morning at the crack of dawn. The Captain puts a notch in a stick and places it deep in the water, and we eat some yummy bag meals, trying to decide if we should ration the rest of the food.

No one really sleeps well. The Captain has dreams of being bitten by a rattler, and as I drift away in to the subconscious, an eight-inch millipede crawls across my face. The rest of the night I balk at every little noise thinking that the big guy’s family has come for revenge. As I stare up at the clearest night sky I have ever seen, a meteor shower criss-crosses my field of view with a brilliant light show.

The next morning, the water on The Captain’s gage is higher than the night before. Wondering how this is possible, we scout the next rapid and hit the water in the first minutes of the day, hoping this will be our last in the gorge.

The high water blazing continues for another mile, where we come around a bend to see the sun illuminating the crown of Tehipite Dome. Our spirits experience another rebirth and, as we bask in the majestic beauty of the Dome, we are confident that we can make it out by the end of the day. We cruise through the meadow, hungry to complete the final nine miles and make our flights home.

As we exit the valley, classic, big-water, Class V rapids one after another find us willing and ready to do whatever it takes to make it out of the gorge. The sun reaches its peak overhead and we come to a lull in the whitewater. It has been a long morning, but we figure with an entire afternoon to work with, the six miles to Yucca Point should be no problem. Our roller coaster ride is almost over, we just want to hear that fat woman sing.

We snack for lunch and push on. To our dismay, the gradient increases and the afternoon gush begins to juice the already too high flows. The feelings of accomplishment everyone had felt prematurely at lunch are being stuffed back down our throats. We follow Tubes into unknown, sieved out side channels, not because it is cool but because we are out of dinners, and sick of dried fruit and nuts; we want to make our flights home and we want to be off this river.

The Captain gets out to scout a little mini side canyon. He points everyone off the drop and gets back in his boat to run it himself. I guess he didn’t get it after watching five people run it because he missed the line, dropped into a hole backed up by a rock and started side surfing. His eyes were as wide as the Mississippi as he looked to The Broiler and yelled, “Get your rope ready!”

Seeing no way out on the river right, he decides to switch a couple ends and turn himself around to face river left. A couple more retendos, and he drops off the side of the hole and into a bigger one in the main flow. A few power window shades in this hole work him further to the left and underneath the most vertical part of the falls at which point he disappears behind

a curtain. No one sees him for a good 10 count. I trade a fearful glance with Kris and Tubes, and then look back upstream to see his orange boat burst through the curtain back to the downstream side and flip again. He rolls up again and furiously back paddles until he is out of the hole.

He peels into the eddy next to me with his helmet all pushed back on his head, looking like he’s just met God.

“Are you okay,” I ask, totally amazed he had held on so long.

“Yah, I knew I had to hang in ...” he says, taking a minute to breath. “Because a swim in here would mean ... you’d be royally SCHIZBLARNIGAN!”

Turning to look downstream I realize that he couldn’t be more correct.

We wait for The Captain to catch his breath and move on. The most impressive display of gradient any of us have ever seen continues to push our limits and challenge our mental and physical endurance. It’s about this time that I drop my boat after slipping during a portage. I chase it downstream like a madman, leaping from rock to rock. My heart beats out of my chest. If I don’t get this back, it is going to be a long walk out of here. Amazingly, it gets stuck in a hole, takes a five-minute ride and floats out into the eddy I am watching from. I am so lucky it didn’t get away. I look to the opposite bank to see the rest of TJ laughing and sharing Petite Ecoliers.

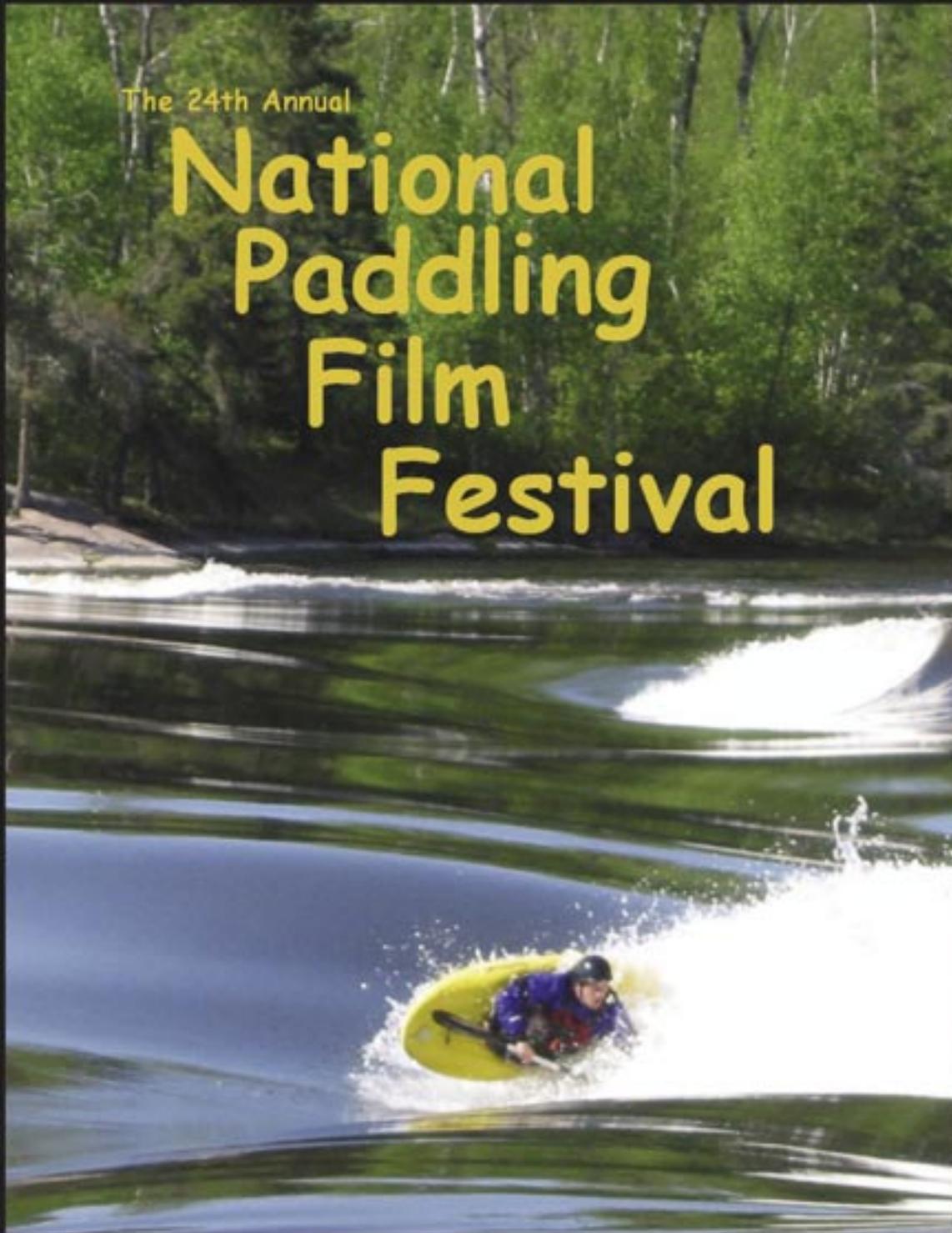
Our progress slows. It is starting to get late in the afternoon and everyone is tired. We portage more and more, occasionally just because it takes less time than finding and running a line. Tubes describes the river as “power-mank,” like Suck Creek and the Linville Gorge all rolled together at super high water.

We continue to claw our way down. Exhaustion, thirst, hunger and fear of another night in the gorge wear down on us all with an indescribable weight. At every corner we expect to see an end to the gradient and the confluence with

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# Middle Kings

the South Fork, but every time all we see is another white torrent pounding its way down the gorge. At one point we turn a bend and see a big wall in the distance. Everyone gets excited, thinking that this is the end, but as we get closer it becomes clear that this is not the case.

The warm sun has gone behind the mountains, and with it goes our happy, good-time feelings. Third Eichhorn hits a mental and physical wall. He says something about staying one more night, and not being able to paddle anymore, but we all kind of ignore him, forcing him to keep on moving. We know we are close at this point, but dark is quickly approaching. Every second now is invaluable, and the river isn't giving an inch.

We come to another power mank portage and The Broiler, Tubes, and I find a small micro eddy on the left and portage rather easily. Third Eichhorn, Kris, and The Captain opt for the river right portage, which proves to be quite technical.

As we wait for them downstream we can see them dropping boats off a 25-foot wall into a giant eddy and jumping in after them. They all disappear behind some rocks and I figure all is well. Just then, I see the tip of Third Eichhorn's red boat peel out from behind the rock and into the current with no kayaker in sight. It quickly turns over and fills with water, passing The Broiler and I off the next few horizon lines. We look downstream and watch as Tubes' blindly chases it through two rapids and comes to a stop before another heinous looking ledge. A chase is out of the question. To run these rapids blind is a dice roll with terrible odds, and Tubes's gambling record ain't all that great. The boat is gone. Eichhorn's only option now is to run out of the gorge with the little bit of daylight left. We all get a little ahead of him before we realize he doesn't even have a headlamp.

Tubes takes off on a solo mission to finish

before dark, while The Broiler, Kris, The Captain, and myself wait for Third Eichhorn to catch up so that we can give him some water and a light. He finally catches up and The Broiler gives him one of the best motivational speeches I have ever heard.

"You think it sucks trying to hike through this now? Just wait till it gets dark! You have to run hard and fast. Do not stop! You don't have time for anything. You have to make it out of here tonight! We are so close man, really close. You will make it, but you got to go hard and you got to go fast. We'll see you at Yucca Point!" And with that we split with our tired old friend and blaze the last few miles of whitewater toward Yucca Point.

As dark sets in, we see the confluence with the South Fork Kings, signifying our take out and the end of day five. The celebratory hoops and hollers ring off the canyon walls. We strip off our gear, raise our hands to the sky and let out the primal roars of survivors. The feeling of accomplishment in that moment is like no other that I have experienced.

An hour rolls by as we wait for Third Eichhorn. Eventually we see a little speck of light coming down the gorge. Bruised and beaten, he finally emerges from the woods across the river. Having survived both a bear and rattlesnake encounter, he shows us his bloody shins and swollen ankles, telling us how he ran through the thickest briars without pain or hesitation, until now. He looks happy just to be alive.

One last time, we pack up our burdens and head up the two-mile trail to the car. It is completely dark now, probably around 10:30pm, and there are only two lights between the six of us. I force feed myself some Goo and hurry out of there with Kris and The Broiler following my light close behind. This leaves The Captain, Third Eichhorn and Tubes with one light

between the three of them.

A couple of times the wind picks up and I can sense through the darkness that it is a steep drop off just beyond the edge of the trail. That's about when The Captain misses a step, stumbles on a rock, and falls off the trail. Nearing the top, they know they are close, because they can hear Kris and I celebrating, but that is when they hear the unmistakable rattle of a Western Diamondback. The three of them awkwardly retreat back down the trail. They make Third Eichhorn go first because he has the light, no boat, and he has already faced a rattler and a bear that evening. He pushes on and quickly comes retreating back, talking about how it sounded big and he thinks he saw it. The next go around they power through and keep moving. A few moments later they come around the corner and see Kris, The Broiler and I drinking a warm Optimator.

We pack the truck to the brim with six people, five kayaks, and ten days worth of gear. Fully loaded, we head into Fresno to find something to eat.

Sitting in my warm home here in Knoxville, I am easily transported back to this time and space as I read this story for the hundredth time trying to figure out how to end it. I can see that crisp, California blue sky, feel the cold waters and taste that nasty bag-food, and it all goes on in between my two ears.

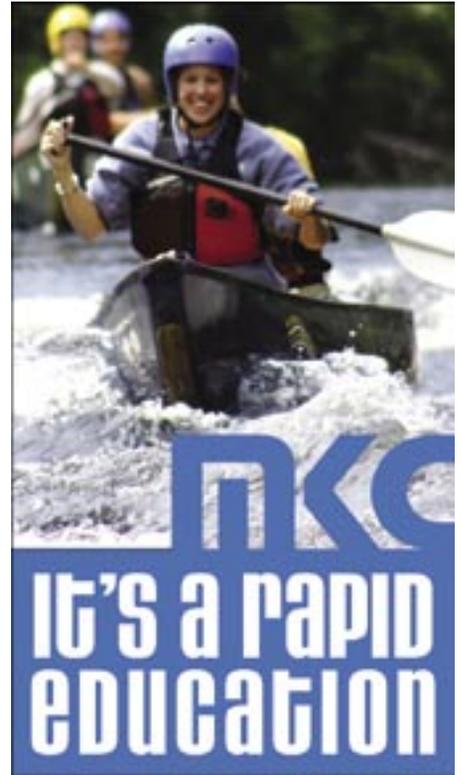
The memory has something to do with it, the reason we kayak. Beyond the rush of flying and the Zen mind testing, we are building a cache of memories that will live on for eternity. I think back to the days when I traveled to places like the Middle Fork of the Kings in my own imagination. It strikes me that the mind is the only place we ever exist, or maybe that is what we strive for: to rid ourselves of the distractions of society, the lies of marketing and politics, the sadness in the world, and escape into the mind. 



*On common runs like the Middle Kings it's important to keep your guard up, so the paparazzi can't get a clear shot of your face.*



*Are you guys staying at the Marina?*



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Wet n' Wild Creekin'

# The "When to Scout" Dilemma

A Collaborative Roundtable



*Making sure you and your paddling partners see the same things can be critical.*

Photo by Robert Peerson

By Steve Augustine

Roundtable participants: Steve Augustine, Craig Parks, Matt Jennings, Juliet Kastorff and Jimmy Blakeney

One of the most complex and important decisions we have to make on the river concerns scouting rapids. When, where, and for how long? Do I look every time, or just once? Should I scout at all? These are just some of the dilemmas we face on the incredible whitewater rivers we paddle.

I remember looking at Class III Nantahala Falls my first time down the river. I stood there and calculated my line for half an hour. All of that indecisive gandering resulted in the neophyte standard: flip right, swim, textbook self-rescue. Nowadays the only time I scout Nantahala Falls is to offer “experienced” advice to friends taking the plunge early in their kayaking careers.

So when should you scout and when is scouting unnecessary? We have brought together a diverse group to chew on this topic. Joining me are Craig, Juliet and Matt with a guest appearance by Jimmy Blakeney. Our combined thoughts on scouting follow.

*What determines whether a rapid is worthy of scouting for you?*

Steve: I believe the best advice is to do

what makes you comfortable—but never take any rapid on any river for granted. Scouting is absolutely a situational endeavor. Many factors play into the extent and fashion of looking at a particular rapid. Rapid characteristics, horizon lines, river flows, capabilities of paddlers in the group, time of day, weather, and the list goes on with these factors; again, totally situational. With a good solid group of boaters, where everyone has knowledge of the river or rapid, or where someone with excellent knowledge of the run explains the rapids to everyone in the group, there is little need for everyone to get out of their boats, walk over slippery rocks and spend valuable daylight on inspecting a rapid well within the scope of manageability of the entire group.

Jimmy: If I can't find a way to see the bottom of the rapid, I scout. The only exception is if I'm following someone who I fully trust.

Matt: It's all visual. Of course, that depends on the gradient/horizon lines. Most rapids that you paddle up to and can see, you'll run without scouting, but if there's something you can't see, then you definitely want to scout it.

To scout or not to scout ... while that is the question, the real answer here is IT DEPENDS.

What factors does it depend on?

1) First, the type of river. I'd separate them into two general categories: creek-like rivers where there's only one channel, and wider, bigger rivers, where the lines may not be conveniently placed nearest the last attainable eddy. The dynamic is different in drop-pool runs. 2) Is it continuous? That's another question. Take the example of my recent adventure on the Rio Lipeo, in Argentina. You have a quarter mile of Class IV river, visibly clean, then we come around a curve and see that the gradient suddenly gets a whole lot steeper. We pull all the tricks to stop at the last eddy to get out and scout, only to discover another continuous quarter mile of Class V rapids. Good to scout these.

Craig: If the riverbed in general has really hard or steep stuff; or if a given rapid is a horizon line ....

Juliet: On my first run down a river, I am all for scouting rapids—even if they end up being wide open and good to go. On something steep, my ability to see the bottom of the rapid is a big determinant of whether I scout or not. If I know that there is a particularly large, significant rapid ahead, I know it will be worth getting out and scouting. It also depends on who I am paddling with. If I am with someone I trust and see their line through a rapid and their body language indicates it was not a big deal, then I will follow them.

*How do you decide between boat scouting and getting out to scout?*

Matt: Here again, when you boat scout, you need to feel comfortable enough going into the eddy that's right above the rapid that you can't see. If you don't feel comfortable going into the eddy that's right above the rapid that you can't see then you will want to get out of your boat to scout earlier. On the other hand, you also can't limit yourself by going down to the last eddy above the drop since getting there may not give you sufficient time to make the line you want. For example, if you have a big wide river, and a horizon line, sometimes it's not in your best interest to get into the last eddy. In a creek it's, again, all visual.

Jimmy: Your skill level often determines this. For many big rapids, it is possible to find a little nook or slack water just above the drop so you can see the landing zone without getting out of your boat. These types of boat scouts often require expert skills due to the small margin for error. I guess you could classify boat scouts just like you do rapids: your skill level determines how hard of a boat scout you're willing to do. Regardless, if you can't see the landing from your boat, you need to get out to scout.

Juliet: Depends on where you can stage from the river. If there is not a good place to boat scout, then it is well worth getting

# When to Scout

out and taking a look from shore.

**Craig:** If I can't creep close enough to the edge in my boat to look I'll hop out. You have to find a safe eddy low enough to see, but where you can still run the line or get out of your boat once you get down there.

*Once you have scouted a rapid, how do you determine whether to scout it again or not?*

**Craig:** If it changes frequently or if I don't really remember the details I might rescout something. Or if it always has big consequences. I've never scouted Pillow Rock Rapid since my first time down the Gauley because you can roll at the bottom, but I always scout Mike Tyson's Punchout (Raven's Fork) because I definitely don't want to crash.

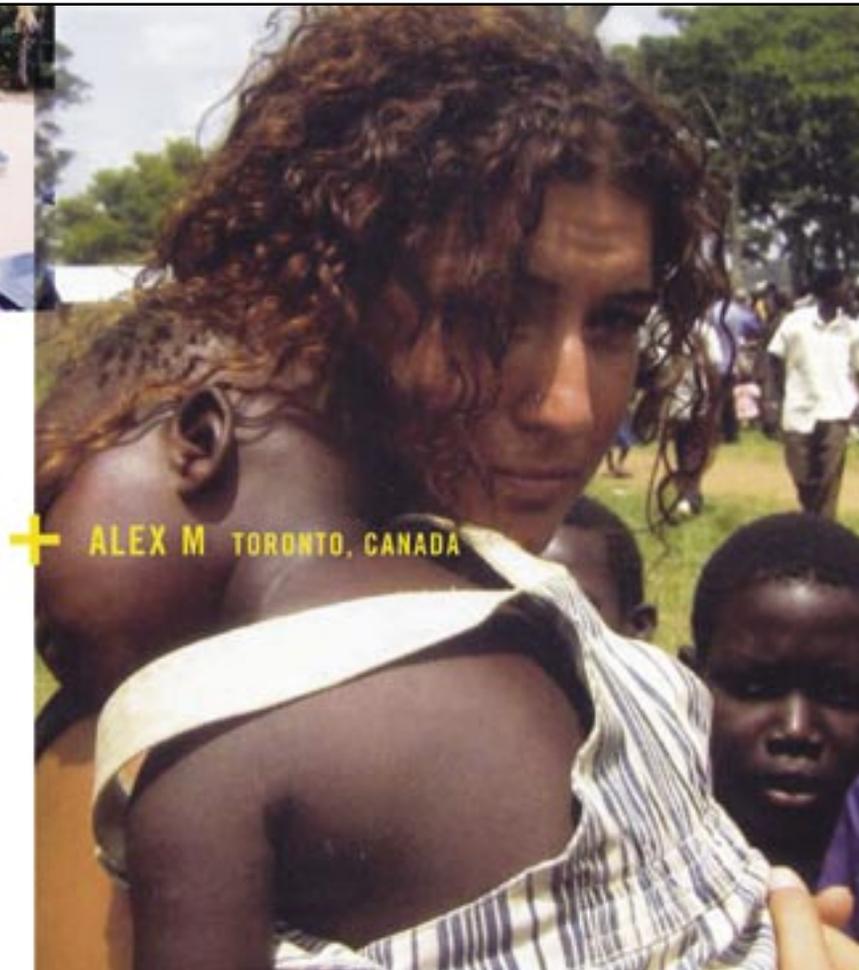
**Steve:** I have some rapids that, for one reason or another, I always get out to look at. There are only a handful out there on the familiar runs, and these rapids might not necessarily be the hardest I run—I just like to look!

**Matt:** It depends on 1) the degree of difficulty and 2) my familiarity with the river. A river that you know well at 1000 cfs, 10,000 cfs and everything in between you shouldn't need to scout. 3) The fluctuations/potential changes: Although I've spent a lot of time on the river, I always scout the biggest rapids (two in Inferno Canyon, Throne Room, Terminator and Casa de Piedra) on the Futaleafu. The reason is that the river changes so dramatically season-to-season and even day-to-day and so do the lines. In creeks, you always want to scout for new logs.

**Juliet:** For me, the three key factors are: 1) if the rapid is committing and known to have wood in it or has had a big flood; 2) how difficult the rapid is. If it is really hard I am all for getting out each time to just make sure I have a visual on the line I want to take. Watching a probe go first sometimes gives you added reassurance; 3) if the water levels tend to change a major rapid. I learned a hard lesson this year in Costa Rica, running a rapid that I had run many times in the last fourteen years. The increased water level changed the rapid drastically. I could have stopped above it in a last-minute eddy to give it one last glance before heading into it, but I didn't. I went into it with 100% focus on my line (I have never taken this rapid for granted). The change took me totally off guard and I paid a big price for just paddling into it without scouting.



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Jimmy: That's a good question and one of the toughies. It's a judgment call, really. If you've run a creek a lot and know what to expect, you don't have to scout every time. However, if there's been a really windy day, or an ice storm, or really high water recently, you have to be extra careful because new strainers may appear, or rocks could've moved.

*What kind of changing conditions would make you rescout a rapid?*

Matt: Water levels (and frightened paddlers).

Steve: Don't forget that river levels can change rapids dramatically. The Ocoee at 3500 cfs is a much different river than at a normal summer flow. Or the Chattooga at 1 ft versus 2 ft. No matter how many times a boater has run a rapid at a certain

level, it very well could look different and have new hazards with more or less water. Sometimes the difference between a favorite play spot and a serious pourover is not a lot of water. River levels—and translating those levels to understand what a rapid contains—should be understood before even putting on.

Craig: If I think there could be new rock or trees I rescout, or if the water levels make a big difference there.

Jimmy: See above and also really cold weather, because ice can be a big hazard! I've been on trips where we started a run and all the drops were clear, but as we entered a shaded part of the gorge all of a sudden the creek was covered in ice bridges. Someone got caught in one and we ended up hiking out. The whole creek was frozen over further downstream!



*Sheer, tight gorge, lots of whitewater - a good place to have a look.*

Photo by Rob Peerson

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# When to Scout

*How much gut instinct plays into your decision to scout or not?*

**Matt:** There are definitely times when I decide to go, just looking at the surrounding environment, even though I can't see the rapid. It depends on the character of the river really. But a good rule of thumb is to say that, if you can't see it, SCOUT IT.

**Jimmy:** How much gut instinct plays into your decision to scout or not? For me it's more calculated than that. Once I've thought about the things mentioned above, my "gut" instinct tells me what to do. Sometimes you take a bit of extra risk depending on how you're feeling on the creek, but I try to always err on the side of caution ... trying not to get

too comfortable out there. When we're running Manns Creek (my home Class V creek in West Virginia) day after day, you can become complacent. You have to remind yourself the dangers are always there, and are always changing, so you don't inadvertently put yourself in a bad position.

**Juliet:** I think a lot of my gut instinct is determined by the caliber of boaters I am with. If I have an implicit trust in the boater(s) I am with (meaning I know them well because I have paddled with them for years), I am a lot more comfortable running things on the fly. I can read their body language and make my own decision confidently. And just because someone I know runs something on the fly does not always mean that I do. I always bring

my two feet along in case I need to check something out!

**Craig:** I usually put everything I know about the run into a decision to scout; my gut reaction would be to scout if I don't know enough. I usually know all I need; I get instinctual if I can't see enough or water does something weird where I can see it. I almost always see enough to run a line and go for it. A total lack of visibility is usually the reason to scout.

**Steve:** I have even found that when I look at rapids too intensely, I often psych myself out and have problems running it. The times I scout briefly, or just go ahead with what I know, I find that instinct and momentum serve me well. This theory generally works on low to mid volume rivers and creeks where rapids are

The advertisement features a central image of a kayaker in a yellow kayak on a river. Surrounding the kayaker are four wetsuits: a yellow and black 'FreeFALL' wetsuit, a green and black 'FreeRYDE' wetsuit, a blue and yellow 'FreePLAY' wetsuit, and a red and black 'SWICX' wetsuit. A 'Trilam' logo is also visible. The text 'The World's Best Paddle in Stohlquist' is prominently displayed in red. Below this, it states: 'Innovative and refined in both design and performance with outstanding waterproof/breathable durability, features, materials and Free mobility. Developed over a lifetime of paddling and used daily by the World's Best... choose Stohlquist.' The Stohlquist logo and 'WaterWare' text are at the bottom right, along with the website 'www.stohlquist.com'. A photo credit 'Steve Fisher at Bus Eater - Ottawa River, by Desr  Pickers' is at the bottom center.

characteristically shorter and require few moves, or a sequence of short moves. On big water, however, where rapids can be hundreds of meters long and might take a long time to scout, wave top scouting works great. In most cases these rapids, once committed to, can be seen entirely from the top. This allows for any hazards i.e. giant holes, boulders, etc. to be seen and negotiated on the fly. This is not always the case though. Knowledge of serious hazards—like Killer Fang Falls being around some bend halfway down the run, approach with caution—can be useful.

*Any other words of wisdom?*

Jimmy: A huge part of creaking is mental. Confidence is key, but it's a double-edged sword. When you find yourself getting confident and feeling solid, that's the best time to re-evaluate and be extra careful, because there's a fine line between confident and cavalier.

Craig (After a day running the Raven's Fork): If I am really scared but know the line I have somebody check for trees for me and then I paddle off it before I realize what I am doing. It worked all day yesterday.

Matt: With the great amount of focus most put into running a rapid at the peak of our abilities, we rarely get ourselves into trouble. It is the case, however, that most of the horror stories we hear of or experience occur when paddlers become complacent. We should all remember: one boater's Section III of the Chattooga, is another's Section IV, is another's Narrows of the Green. Perceptions are everything.

Juliet: Scouting is not an ego thing. It is a part of paddling. Anyone who refuses to scout because they are too good for

scouting is not a good paddling partner. And in asking someone about your ability to run something or not, beware of the words "oh, you will be fine." If you get out to scout a rapid and do not see your line, don't run it. On the other hand, you can get wiggled out with too much scouting. If you know the rapid, know the line, know the conditions—don't keep scouting. Sometimes you just have to suck it up and run a rapid that makes you nervous to prove to yourself that you have the ability to run it.

Steve: Whatever you decide to do, don't forget the time tested, best safety precautions we have out there: Sound educated judgment. Hindsight is always 20/20. Never become complacent. And get as much knowledge of your destination as possible—that is half the battle. 



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# Upper Cherry Creek

# Sugary Schweet

by The Dogg

Upper Cherry Creek has been getting a lot of press lately for being the latest, greatest run. With all the hype, one might say that the Dogg was more than a little curious. Was Upper “Strawberry” as big and bad as everyone was saying, or was it just something that adults made up to scare little kids, like the Boogey Man, Mickey Mouse or Barney the purple dinosaur? To find out, I flew to California during the summer of 2004 to try and run this creek. Having never done a multi-day trip before, I was not fully aware of what it meant to try to use a 60-70 pound boat full of gear. More or less, I underestimated the magnitude of the situation. I opted to build my own backpack for the 11-mile hike in and decided to leave the water purifier behind since my friends had several and I could just borrow theirs. To make a long story short, I fell behind my buddies due to the constant adjustments I had to make to my cheap backpack. Then, about five miles into the hike, my backpack broke. I left the boat and continued with all my gear but got lost about eight miles in. I camped and was eaten alive by mosquitoes (one eye swelled shut). Being out of water and dehydrated the next morning, I decided that the best idea for my survival was to admit defeat, walk back, and live to fight another day. I may not have been victorious but I didn’t lose my head like Ann Berlin!

One might assume that I might leave California and never return. Will you return, you ask? You bet your booger I will! As with all great athletes or superheroes, defeat doesn’t sit well. The Dogg is not one for giving up and, in my estimation, Upper “Watermelon” had won that battle but the war wasn’t over. Did Superman give up when faced with kryptonite? Did Rocky give up when facing Mr. T or Drago the Russian? Did the Red Sox give up when facing elimination against the Yankees in the 2004 playoffs? No, I think not! In all instances, the athlete/superhero came back to beat their opponent into an embarrassing pulp! Well, the Dogg is no different. Would I be the world’s most premier athlete and greatest kayaker

EVER if I was going to be a quitter! No, it was time to step up to the plate and show “Grapefruit” Creek that if you bite the Dogg, the Dogg bites back! You mess with the bull and you get the horns! When I come back, I’m crackin’ skulls! It’s TRUE! It’s TRUE!

Now, moving on to the summer of 2005, the Dogg was ready for redemption. I flew to Sacramento, where I was grateful to be able to stay with Greg Speicher for a few days while Jeremy Laucks’ Chasing Rain van could get some engine repairs. While waiting for Jeremy I cruised around the Sacramento area to pick up chicks, a successful venture for sure. Since I appeared in *People Magazine’s* 50 most beautiful people of 2005 issue, the girls have been hounding the Dogg for some lovin’. And who am I to deny them? After a particularly enjoyable rendezvous with the Sacramento Kings’ cheerleading squad, I decided to switch my focus back to kayaking and Upper “Blackberry.” Once Jeremy was able to pick me up, it was GAME ON! Who was Upper “Orange” to deny you, the anticipating reader, another work of literary greatness from the Dogg! The nerve! As your paddling superhero, it is my mission to run SIK drops and save the world from boring kayak articles! We eventually headed to Upper “Kumquat” and were set to have perfect conditions for the run.

The Park Service gave us our permit and a list of rules to follow while we were in the wilderness. Most of those were things I already knew, like carrying my boat to avoid plastic shavings. I found it very funny that they wanted me to smear my poo on the rocks. I used to get in trouble with the law when I was a kid for lighting bags of poo on fire and leaving them on people’s doorsteps. Now I had a viable legal authority telling me to go out and smear away! I told the ranger that he might regret asking me to do this but I figured, “What the heck, why should I argue?”

We drove through the town of Cherry Lake and I took the time to stop by the phone

booth and transform from an ordinary citizen like you, the reader, into your paddling superhero! Once at the put-in it was time to put my game face on. Upper “Tangerine” had bested the Dogg once but that was not going to happen this time. Jeremy told me that he would keep me on a “short leash” to make sure that I didn’t get lost this time. Carrying a boat on a hike of this magnitude is quite a challenge. It is important that you have everything you need, you really have to cross your “t’s” and dot your lowercase “j’s.” However, to keep the weight down, it is a good idea to bring only the bare necessities. I decided to leave the black market stinger missiles that I had purchased at a government auction of seized contraband behind in the van. Although potentially useful if I saw a bear, they were not necessary and would have added a fair amount of weight. The hike took us somewhere around eight hours to complete. Jeremy kept asking the question, “Does the fun ever start?” I told him to stop being a moon-faced assassin of joy because it wasn’t going to make the hike any better. Besides, the scenery was nice and the day wasn’t too hot. Prepared with a state-of-the-art backpack, a water purifier, and high quality boots cured in Sicilian Sumac leaves, I smoked the hike in with no problems, a feat that should come as no surprise seeing how as I’m THE world’s most premier athlete. I warned Jeremy not to fall behind because stragglers have been known to get hit by trucks. I think that Jeremy was pretty worn out by the end of the hike because he started talking weird stuff, referencing Navajos, Hopis, and kachina dolls. I was getting pretty worried about him but he snapped out of it once we put on the creek.

We started down the creek in the early evening and headed downstream to get away from the hotbed of mosquitoes that is Lord’s Meadow (the put-in). We were immediately greeted by some slides that created some white H2Oooooohhhhh Yeah! The second good slide was long and dropped steeply, ending in a 15-foot falls. I flew down the slide and caught a major SIKy off the boof lip of the falls. Oh



*Jeremy Lauks contemplating the  
fruity goodness.*

**Photo by The Dogg**

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*Need caption*

**Photo by ??????**

# Upper Cherry Creek

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Yesh! It was SCCHHWEEEEETTTT!!!! I wondered if it would be much more difficult to paddle with a boat full of gear but it wasn't really a problem. I was a little worried that Upper "Rhubarb" would push me around like a Playskool® corn popper but this was not the case. However, when you can leap buildings in a single bound like me, your worries quickly fade away!

After a few more sloping ledge drops, Jeremy and I decided that we had put enough distance between us and the mosquitoes and we decided to camp. The next morning we headed downstream through countless slides and ledge drops. Most drops were boat-scoutable so we made excellent progress. We were motoring along, beating the horse's behind with a belt! Several of the rapids featured extremely narrow slots that the water was funneling through, which led to some excitement in a few places. We ran through a narrow slot off a six-foot ledge and one of us was back-ended harshly into the wall. I won't say who this happened to but we'll call this paddler Jeremy L. Wait, that might be too obvious. How about J. Laucks? That's better. It was in this part of the run that Jeremy and I passed a CREW of excellent boaters and young whippersnappers who had decided to hike in at night and do the whole run in a day. This feat strikes the Dogg as a very admirable accomplishment and I would someday like to try it myself, once I have learned all the lines.

It wasn't long before we had entered the first gorge, which featured some steeper ledge drops. One drop was comparable to Gorilla on the Green Narrows but seemed narrower and sketchier. It looked like it would be a fun drop if you aced it but, if you blew it, you'd be in a world of hurt. Contact with rocks was a distinct possibility for the upside-down kayaker. A blown line here would really put the lime in your coconut! Jeremy and I decided to walk and were greeted by more good drops downstream. One drop had a two-foot ledge into a sizeable hole followed by a six-foot boof ramp that you needed to get to in order to avoid a swirling vat of pure evilness recessed against a cliff. Jeremy and

I both aced it but it was a pretty scary drop. Soon, we were out of the first gorge and many great slides carried us to the crux of the run, Cherry Bomb Gorge. We got out and scouted the entire gorge to make sure that we knew all the lines. Floating willy-nilly, haphazard, or slapdash into this gorge would likely end in disaster!

Once in the gorge, the creek goes Richter! It gets funky like chicken, in the mix like trail, super like Mario®! The challenges posed by this gorge can be quite scary but fear is not an option. Fear causes hesitation and hesitation causes your worst fears to come true! This gorge begins with a sieved-out area that you have to portage around to get to Cherry Bomb Falls. I slipped on the portage and skinned my knuckles on a rock. Since nobody makes me bleed my own blood and gets away with it, I was determined to seek revenge on Cherry Bomb Falls. The falls was ominous sounding, like the roar of thin sheet metal being shaken backstage during the storm scene in a play. This falls is a very large and steep slide that banks into a wall at the bottom. How high, you ask? Well, it was 10 stories tall if it was a foot! It probably drops a total of 30 feet, going down a steep slope before hitting the launch ramp and falling into the short pool before the wall. I took a look at my watch and the big hand said that it was time to get SIK! Both Jeremy and I came down with left angle and caught major air off the launcher at the bottom. Oh YESH! It was NICHE! 100% Pure Adrenaline!

At this point we were down in the heart of the vertical-walled gorge and escape would have been nearly impossible. The drops are fun ledges of 5-8 feet, some with sizeable hydraulics. The most formidable of these is called The Weir, which falls about 4 feet into a dam-type hydraulic trapped in by the canyon walls and a boulder downstream. It is extremely important to get to the left after landing off the drop. I don't want to even think about what might happen if you got surfed here. Soon the gorge opened up and the creek raced down a very long slide where I reached the speed of exactly 734.3975 miles per hour. The long slide carried me into the

Teacups, which are a series of six perfectly-shaped drops of six to 12 feet in height, all in a row. These were so sweet that I had to carry up and run these several times. Yeah buddy! I was happier than a kid who just got a quarter from the Nose Fairy for leaving a nose nugget under his pillow!

We decided to camp a little downstream from here on the right since the Park Service told us not to camp at the Flintstone Camp. It was still early evening so we decided to just hang out and kick it like Pele. It would have been nice to have an Eskimo Pie® at this point but, because of the heat, the only treat that I could have was a package of astronaut dry ice cream that I bought on Ebay®. The warm weather was relaxing and welcomed me to jump in and swim, which was very refreshing. This was all good and fun until I got bitten by an ill-tempered large-mouth bass! If you've ever been bitten by one, well, citizen, I don't have to tell you what it feels like! I occupied myself for the rest of the evening with a mini yo-yo that I had packed. I must say that this may be the best invention since pay toilets!

The next morning, after a good poo smearing session and another run of the Teacups, I was ready to head downstream and do battle with the lower part of Upper "Kiwi." After a quick portage around a sieved-out falls we came to a clean 30-footer. It fell down an 80-degree slope into a beautiful deep pool. This was followed by a narrow boulder drop that fed right into Double Pothole. Double Pothole goes down a steep slope before falling off a 15-foot falls into a short pool followed by a 12-foot cascade. This drop requires a certain amount of precision to avoid the pothole in the center and line up for your boof. I developed a keen eye from my days as a professional boar hunter in Punjab and this skill served me well here. I knew that I would ace this drop because when the Dogg zones in on a drop the outcome is always success. It is an exact science, consistent as gravity! I came flying down the slope and launched a SCHWEET one off the falls and then flew down the runout cascade! Oh yeah! This rapid is top drawer, first cabin! I emerged from the drop with



Classic Upper Cherry Action

Photos by Charlie Munsey

my hair glistening in the morning sun like fresh snot on a nose hair after a sneeze!

Immediately below Double Pothole, Upper "Apricot" entered another gorge and went down another series of teacups. This one had four drops between 5 and 15 feet in height. I must say that the two to three miles from the start of the first gorge to the bottom of this third gorge contain some of the finest drops that this super-paddler has ever seen! For my money, it doesn't get any better than this! It can get kind of crazy because it never stops. It just keeps coming and coming and coming, there's never a let-up. It's relentless. And then the bar code reader breaks and it's Publishers Clearing House® day! I digress....

We got out below the Teacups to scout the rest of the gorge. There was a cascading 20-footer into a steep-walled section. Below the 20-footer, the run sieved out into a boulder field before exiting the canyon off a 40-foot falls called Dead Bear Falls. Jeremy and I knew that portaging the sieve in this vertical-walled gorge would be almost as difficult as trying to milk a gnat or teach Japanese to a monkey so we opted to walk the whole shooting match. Running this section at this water level was one of the worst ideas I've ever heard of. Oh yes, it is terrible! However, a group of guys ran the gorge as we were portaging and, when we talked later in the trip, they confirmed that the portage was as miserable as we had imagined!

Once around the gorge I was contemplating carrying up to run Dead Bear Falls. My mind was going back and forth like a weathervane in the wind. Ultimately, I decided that, in order to get the maximum SIKness of the run, I had to run it. How could I look you, the fans, in the face if I had not gone out there and given 110%! You expect nothing less from

the World's Greatest Kayaker! The water was flowing under, around, and through the boulders that were perched on the lip of the falls. There wasn't a space large enough for a boat to fit through. However, I was not going to be denied. I decided that I was going to seal launch off one of the boulders and run it. Jeremy kept calling me a tool and saying that it wasn't a true run of the falls. Well, I'm sure this subject could be debated until we're blue in the face but the bottom line is that I descended the falls and it was SIK! I got in my boat on one of the boulders. I seal launched two feet, landed on the lip of the falls, took two controlling strokes to line up and plunged 40 feet straight down into the beautiful, deep pool below. I resurfaced perfectly and was beginning to celebrate when I got pushed into the bowled-out wall on the right. I got flipped against the wall and the current held me there. I tried several unsuccessful roll attempts that were held back by the wall. I was contemplating a swim but then I realized that, as your paddling hero, I must fight through and save myself in the face of danger. After all, when you are stronger than steel and faster than a speeding bullet, there is nothing that can't be accomplished. I was able to muster the strength to right the kayak and paddle away from the drop in full celebration mode. Being the scofflaw that I am, I eschewed the rule about keeping the whooping and hollering to a minimum and got jiggy with it! That's the kind of drop that'll make you stand up and yell, "DOGGPOUND!"

Heading downstream, we continued with more fun slides and drops for another mile. Soon, the run flattened out for a nice pastoral stretch that allowed us to look around and take in the gorgeous scenery that surrounded us. We must have passed a dead animal carcass at some point because a disgusting odor perforated the



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# Upper Cherry Creek

air. It was a smell that could gag a maggot; even stink would say it stinks! After about a mile of this the river bottom changed from sand back to rock and we entered a junky section of creek with a lot of sieved-out areas. There were a few portages involved and a lot of scraping. All this miserable paddling had me thinking that this section of the run might be the biggest ripoff since the Neverending Gobstopper! However, cutting Upper "Raspberry" a break, it is quite a lot to ask a run to be perfect for 12 miles.

We finally entered a narrow gorge and the water appeared to be staying a little more floatable. We mostly boat-scouted the drops, which allowed us to make good progress. We came to a questionable drop and Jeremy decided to just go for it. The

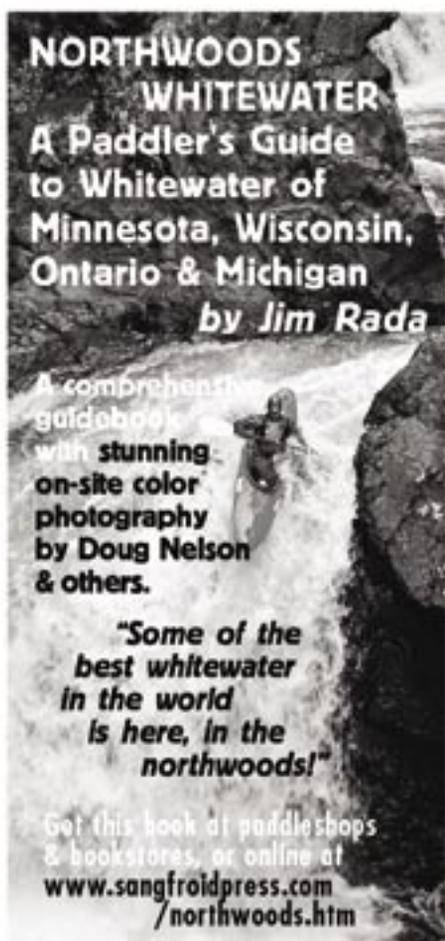
drop fell 10 feet and pinched into a narrow slot with a nasty recirculating hole at the bottom. I didn't like the looks of it so I scouted. Jeremy was stuck in a swirling mess at the bottom which was circling around near the drop and apparently had a guard rock on the exit. He attempted several times to exit but was sucked back toward the drop several times. Finally, he yelled at me to do something so I grabbed my rope. Before I needed to toss him the rope he was able to climb out of the eddy and get downstream. I'm sure that all the park 'n play sessions in Colorado helped with the stamina to hang in there and escape that evil snare. I opted to walk the drop and seal launch in below.

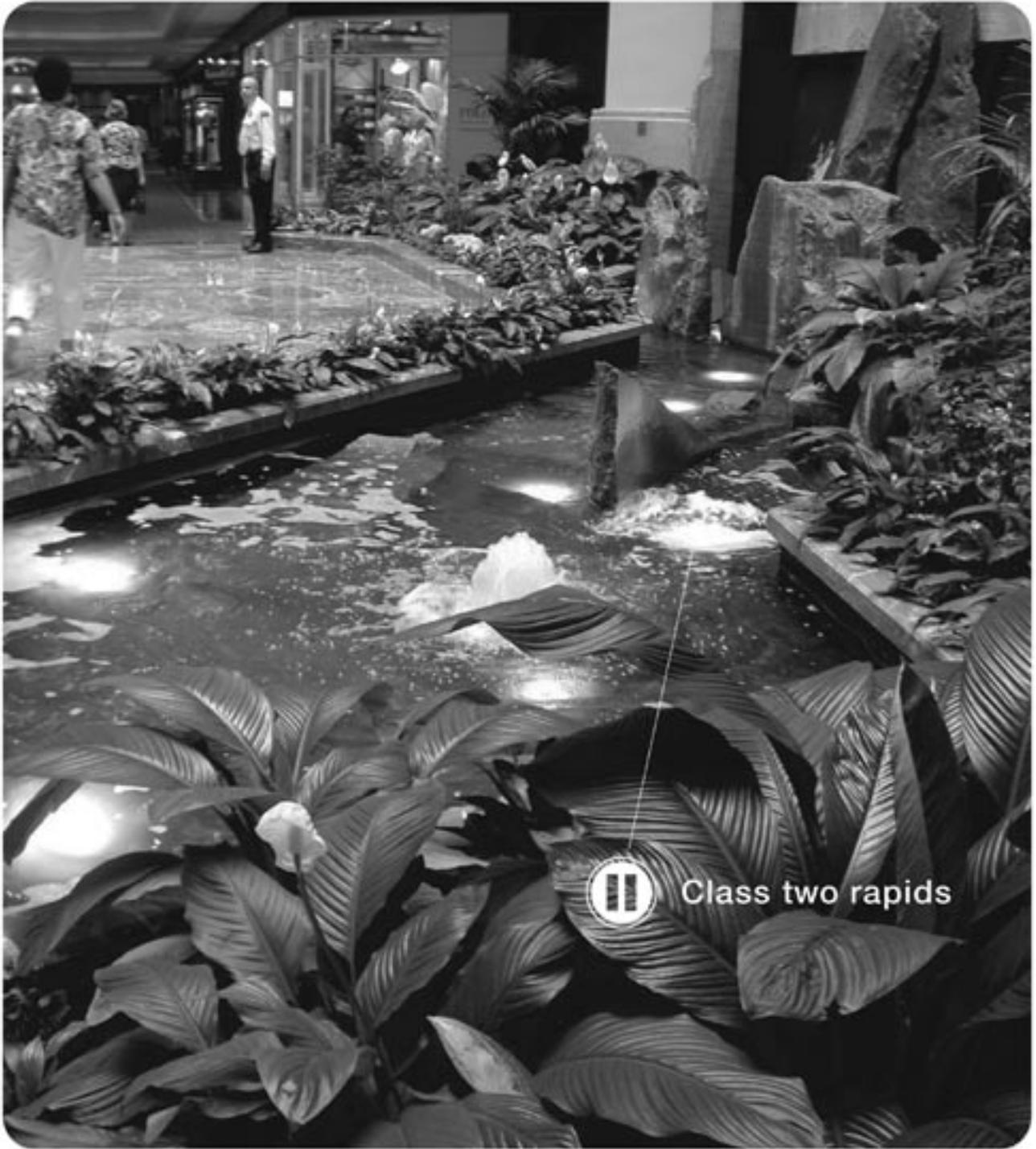
The last mile of the creek contained a lot of steep boogy water, with several slides and a 15-foot falls. Once within sight of the lake the run kicks it up a notch for one last steep section. Though not outrageously difficult, these drops can pack a wallop to the paddler who has gone to sleep and placed the kayak on autopilot (The trip's not over until the boat is tied to the car, complete with bow and stern lines!). Below the falls, there is a 10-foot angled drop into a nasty hole backed by an ugly boulder. A good right boof was required to get through this, which we both aced. Right above the lake there is a narrow slide that funnels into a powerful hole. Jeremy went deep into the hole and was gone off the surface, disappearing like a beer fart in a whirlwind. I got up some speed and plowed into the hole, hitting it hard like Dick Butkis. The hole slammed back and stood me up on my tail before depositing me upside down in the pool. The final drop is a 12-foot double drop run down the middle onto a clapper shelf and then falling into the pool. We were able to celebrate after that since we were out of the wilderness area and thus wouldn't be ruining anyone's "wilderness experience." Once in the parking lot, Jeremy and I were keeping it real, homie, by blaring some fresh hip hop from the subwoofer in the back of the Rain Van

and each firing up 40s of Steel Reserve. Only the highest quality beverage for us! We then popped a keg and the girls came rushing in from Cherry Lake. It was like a hummingbird feeder! However, the party ended abruptly when the scary lady with sideburns showed up.

Upper "Peach" was a great run that featured some world-class whitewater and covered some very challenging terrain. I am proud to have accomplished a run down this creek and will certainly come back to run it again. The difficult test of carrying a fully-loaded boat for 11 miles was definitely worth it. Upper Cherry Creek is as fine of a specimen of steep whitewater as I've ever seen! You might want to run it soon; when word gets out that a famous celebrity like the Dogg has been here, they'll probably start charging admission!

Unfortunately for us, Upper "Pear" is a late season run and we couldn't find much to run after that. The rest of the California trip featured lots of hanging out in parking lots while the Chasing Rain van underwent repairs and driving around, looking at unrunnable (too low) creeks. But that is another story.... 





Without your help, there will be fewer places left to paddle.

Join the fight to keep our rivers clean and accessible at [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)



# AW Constitution

## As Amended in September 2006

### 1. Name

The name of this organization is American Whitewater.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of American Whitewater is to:

- a. Encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of American recreational waterways for human powered craft;
- b. Protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources;
- c. Promote safety and proficiency in all aspects of white-water activities such as the navigation of moving water, teaching, teamwork, leadership, and equipment design, by publishing and demonstrating developments in these and related fields;
- d. Promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

### 3. Membership

Membership in this affiliation is open to all individuals interested in the recreational use and conservation of American waterways who will subscribe to the above purposes.

### 4. Affiliated Clubs

All clubs or organizations which share the above purpose are invited to affiliate as member clubs.

### 5. Board of Directors

The powers, duties and responsibilities of proper management of the affairs of this organization shall be vested in a Board of Directors, to be elected to staggered terms by the individual dues-paying members of the organization. The Board of Directors shall consist of not less than 9 nor more than 30 individuals who are each members in good standing of the organization. The Board of Directors shall specify the number of members to serve on the Board before each election. The Board may

also appoint up to 10 Honorary Board Members.

Honorary Board Members shall be individuals who, by reason of special expertise, experience, or other qualifications, are especially qualified to advise and assist the Board. Honorary Board Members shall be nonvoting.

Meetings of the Board may be conducted in person or by telephone, including conference calls. Voting and other Board actions may be taken at a meeting, by telephone or e-mail polling, or by mail.

The Board of Directors shall be assisted by a seven-member Executive Committee composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and two (2) at large members nominated by the full Board. The President shall be chairman of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be in session at all times, and shall exercise all powers of the Board of Directors, subject only to such restrictions as the full Board may from time to time impose.

The Board, as a full Board or through its Executive Committee, shall have the power to manage all of the business affairs of the organization; to elect or appoint officers or committee chairpersons; to fill all vacancies on the Board, or any committee, or in any office if any when the same occur; to remove from office any officer, Director, or committee member for good cause shown; to hire the Executive Director of the organization; and to do any act reasonably necessary to the attainment of the purposes of the organization.

### 6. Nominating New Board Member

Before an election the Board of Directors shall prepare and publish in an official communication (journal, website, e-mail, direct mail, etc.) a list of nominees to fill vacancies on the Board, together with their names, a brief summary of their background and qualifications, and a voting mechanism to be used for the election. The Board may accept suggestions from any member or affiliate

for nominations. To the extent possible, the Board should be generally representative of the geographical diversity of the membership of the organization.

The President shall be Chairperson of the organizational meeting of each new Board.

### 7. Officers

The Board of Directors shall elect the following officers of the organization from the members of the Board: a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board shall likewise hire an Executive Director and such other officers and agents of the organization as the Board deems advisable.

The Executive Director shall be the administrative head of the organization. He or she shall serve as general manager of the business of the organization. The Board may delegate additional authorities and functions to the Executive Director and, notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution, authorize the Treasurer to approve compensation to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director shall receive all funds and manage all finances of the organization and shall be responsible for keeping the books and records of accounts, in accordance with generally accepted accounting procedures.

All other officers or committees shall have such powers and obligations as the Board may delegate to them. Any member may be both a director and an appointed officer of the organization, so long as he is a due-paying member in good standing.

### 8. Vacancies

Any vacancy in any office, or on any committee, or on the Board, whether it be occasioned by the inability, disqualification, removal, resignation or death of any officer, Director, or committee member shall be filled for the remainder of the un-expired term by appointment by the Board of Directors, the replacement to be selected from the dues-paying members of the organization.

## 9. Terms of Office

Directors shall hold office for a term of three (3) years.

Terms of office will begin on January 1 and end on December 31. All other officers and committee members shall be deemed re-appointed by the incoming Board of Directors to serve until the next Board is elected, unless sooner removed.

Any Director, officer, or committee member may be elected or appointed to successive terms in different offices.

## 10. Removal

Any Director may be removed from office by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the remaining Directors. Any officer, appointee or committee member may be removed from office by the Board of Directors on the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members then comprising the Board of Directors.

In all cases of removal from any office, the party to be removed shall receive fifteen days notice in writing of the pending motion to remove and of the specific reasons why removal is being considered. A written letter from the President, or Vice-President of the Board, properly stamped and addressed to the last known address of the party in question, shall be sufficient notice, provided that it is mailed at least 18 days in advance of the final action of the Board. Within that 15-day period the party whose removal is being considered may mail to the Board of Directors a written statement in opposition or explanation.

At any time after the expiration of the fifteen-day period the Board may act on the motion to remove, and shall immediately notify the party in question in writing of the decision of the Board

## 11. Finance

This organization shall at all times be a non-profit organization dedicated to the purposes set forth in this Constitution and no person or organization shall ever profit by or through this organization. All money received by the organization

from any source whatever shall be used for membership services, for conservation and education purposes, or for specific contributions toward whitewater sport and river conservation. The Treasurer may approve salaries and expenses of the Executive Director and other employees of the organization and the Treasurer may also reimburse officers or members for ordinary expenses incurred in furthering the purposes of the organization, upon presentation of records of the expenses.

The Board may authorize special items of expense if it believes that the purposes of the organization will thereby be furthered, without penalizing the regular programs of the organization.

Upon the winding up and dissolution of this corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the corporation, the remaining assets shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation or corporation, which is organized and operated, exclusively for charitable, educational, and/or scientific purposes related to whitewater or to river conservation and which has established its tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. If this corporation holds any assets in trust, such assets shall be disposed of in such manner as may be directed by decree of the superior court of the county in which this corporation's principal office is located, upon petition therefor by the Attorney General or by any person concerned in the liquidation.

## 12. Voting

Each individual who is a dues-paying member for the current year, in good standing, shall be entitled to one vote for each of the Directors to be elected at the election, and shall be entitled to one vote in any election to amend the Constitution.

Votes may not be cumulated. The Board of Directors shall make fair and reasonable provisions for the receipt and counting of ballots in all election so as to guarantee that all votes cast are properly counted and the election duly certified. Each

ballot must state on its face the date by which it must be received in order to be counted. Ballots received after that date will be rejected. The Board, at its option, may provide in the By-Laws for special or junior classes of affiliates, paying lesser dues, with restricted voting privileges.

## 13. Qualification for Office

No person shall hold any office or be nominated, appointed or elected to any office unless he is a bona fide dues-paying member of the American Whitewater. Failure to keep dues current shall be a mandatory ground for removal of any officer or director.

## 14. Continuity of Government

In the event that no elections are held, or that final tabulation of ballots is incomplete on January 1, or if for any reason the new members of the Board of Directors are not ready to assume office on January 1, or in the event that any office, appointed position, or committee assignment is not properly filled by the time the incumbent's term expires, then the incumbent shall hold over in office and be fully empowered to act and discharge the duties of the office until a successor has been duly elected, appointed, or qualified.

## 15. Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution must first be approved by a majority of the Board of Directors, and published in an official communication along with the Board's explanation of the same. In the same communication, a voting mechanism should be provided for use by the members. Amendments shall pass if two-thirds of the votes actually received back from the members are in favor of the amendments proposed. The ballots shall state the date by which they must be received in order to be counted. 

# AW Bylaws

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As Amended in 2006

## 1. Membership

Membership for one year will be granted upon written application and the payment of dues in the amount established by the Board.

## 2. Affiliation

Bona fide boating clubs, conservation organizations, and organized groups who subscribe to the purposes set forth in the Constitution of this organization may affiliate with American Whitewater by paying annual affiliate dues in the amount established by the Board.

## 3. Elections

The Board shall have its slate of candidates for the new members of the board of Directors for the upcoming year completed so that the ballot, the list of nominees, a brief summary concerning each nominee, and the instructions concerning voting procedures can be published in an official communication.

Each member may cast one vote for each of the directors to be elected. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall constitute the incoming new members of the Board of Directors.

In the event of a tie vote between any two or more candidates, the President of the Board of Directors then in office will immediately cast one vote, or such votes as may be necessary, in order to break the tie without advancing any candidate receiving his/her vote ahead of any other candidate who received more votes but was not involved in a tie vote. In the event that the President is required to exercise this power, an official communication shall, in addition to the usual election results and notices of appointed by the board, carry a brief explanation of the status of the candidates at the time the deciding votes were cast by the President to break the tie.

## 4. Procedure Upon Election

As soon as possible after the balloting ends, the incoming Board of Directors will

organize itself, elect its officers, and decide whether to adopt, in whole or in part, the appointments made by the previous board or to make new appointments in all or any positions. The President shall be Chairman for the organizational meeting of each new Board of Directors.

New members of the Board of Directors will take office on January 1 following their election.

Any officer, committee members, or director who is removed from office or replaced by a duly elected or appointed successor, shall immediately forward and deliver to their successor all of the files, equipment, and property of the organization in their possession or control.

## 5. Voting

All nominations shall be submitted by members in good standing. Where ballots are used, as in voting for directors, voting instructions shall be plainly communicated on the ballot. All voting in elections for directors or to amend the Constitution must be done through official communications to the membership.

Voting within the Board of Directors may be informal, and letters, phone, or e-mails will suffice. The President of the Board of Directors may receive and count informal ballots, or the members may decide on any other reasonable manner of procedure.

All official ballots shall have the date by which they must be communicated plainly on each ballot.

## 6. Departments & Committees

The Board may at any time establish such Committee or Departments as it deems necessary to conduct the business of the organization.

## 7. Fiscal and Electoral Years

The books shall be maintained on a calendar year basis and audited at least annually.

## 8. Procedure on New Membership

When a new member of affiliate is enrolled,

the dues shall be sent to the organization's mailing address. The Executive Director shall see that (1) the name and address of the new member or affiliate is promptly placed on the list of new members and affiliates, (2) the next issue of the journal is sent to the new member or affiliate, and (3) the new member of affiliate receives any new membership materials which may be available.

All enrollments shall be for a one-year period beginning on the date of the enrollment unless the Executive Director establishes other membership periods, approved by the Board

## 9. Amendments

Amendments to these by-laws may be made by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors. The changes made by the Board shall be published for the benefit of the membership in an official communication. 

# VOTE

## Board Members 2007



**Evie Locke**  
**Charlemont, MA**

My love for water began as early as I can remember at the local lake club, spending all my summer days swimming, fishing and messing about in boats. I came to understand how murky the water in that little man-made lake was when I went to summer camp on pristine Sebago Lake in Maine. There I learned to canoe as a teenager and then returned as a college student to direct the canoeing program for a couple of summers. I was introduced to whitewater in high school, which was only 10 minutes from Tariffville Gorge on the Farmington River, and where we were lucky enough to have a slalom team. We were involved in organizing races there and one year we hosted the national team trials, so I was exposed to and inspired by the best slalom paddlers of the time. After a hiatus of some years on the west coast, I moved back to New England and, not too much later, discovered Zoar Outdoor and the Deerfield River in Massachusetts. I worked at Zoar for 11 years, first as a raft guide and then as Office Manager and occasional kayak instructor. I left Zoar in 2004 to raise my twins who are currently two years old. I am looking forward to introducing them to whitewater soon!



**Jennie Goldberg**  
**Seattle, WA**

Like you, I want to be one of the people who helps ensure that flows are guaranteed, free-flowing rivers are protected and that the public has access to its whitewater resources. That's why, after six years on the AW Board, I'm running for re-election again. Quite frankly, I don't know what I'd do without access to clean, boatable, wilderness rivers. Over 25 years of paddling has me hooked and committed to making sure I can continue my whitewater habit for another 50-plus years.

I'm proud to say I'm an active member of this organization. I will continue to bring my personal perspectives to help shape AW's decisions on river issues and on what it takes to keep an organization happy, efficient and effective. I live in Seattle and plan on continuing the organization's equal focus on AW's stewardship of whitewater treasures all across the United States. I want to ensure that AW involves and learns from our members. I want to work on projects that will keep the organization financially stable.

So, talk to your deadbeat boater buddies who aren't members into joining AW, increase your annual contribution, and vote for Jennie. It's good river karma.

Each year American Whitewater membership elects board members to serve three year terms. The following candidates are volunteering to serve three-year terms on the American Whitewater Board of Directors. Candidate biographies can be read on page 63-64.

Please vote for five American Whitewater Board of Directors:

- Evie Locke
- Jennie Goldberg
- Adam Cramer
- Tim Kelley
- Eric Nies

Approve American Whitewater bylaws as amended by the American Whitewater Board of Directors, September 2006. Amended bylaws can be read on page 62

- Yes       No

Please write your name:

Please provide your American Whitewater membership number:

Please return ballot to:  
American Whitewater  
PO Box 1540  
Cullowhee, NC 28723

*Deadline for submitting ballots is January 15, 2007.*

**Thank you for your participation in this important election process.**

# W O T E

## Board Members 2007



### Adam Cramer Washington DC

I am just about to finish my first tour on the AW Board of Directors. I have had a great time, learned quite a bit and would be honored to serve one more term. I am a DC local from a boating and professional standpoint. I pay my bills by being an attorney and policy dork, like many others in the Washington area. I am also a Potomac local, and this summer I helped form the Great Falls Kayak Coalition (GFKC) to help maintain the great relationship between the boating community and the web of land managers that has jurisdiction over our local huckspot, Great Falls. In addition, I have done my best to help AW play a supporting role to the committed locals on other great runs in the Mid-Atlantic, such as the Upper Yough and the Upper Blackwater. If I am granted another term on the board, I will continue these efforts.



### Eric Nies

I still remember my first day in a kayak, thirty years ago: full-length boat, horse-collar life jacket, flipping and swimming 10 minutes from the put-in. A decade later I was guiding and teaching kayaking full-time, making my living on the rivers that I still love today: the Chattooga, the Gauley, the Grand

Canyon, the Cal-Salmon, the Bio-Bio and Futaleufu, the Pacuare and Reventazon in Costa Rica, and the Motu and Rangitata in New Zealand. For an old dog, I still get out a lot. And I think I have an unusually broad take on whitewater sport. I've been pegged (correctly) as the safety geek with the big helmet, but I've also gone solo on Bald Rock and Decker's Creek. These days I make my living as an ER doc in New York, and I paddle for fun. Raft, canoe, kayak, East coast or West coast, old-school or new-school, it's all about getting on the water, connecting with friends, and having a good time. And I believe that one of the reasons we all can do just that is because American Whitewater has worked so tirelessly and successfully on issues of safety, access, education, and conservation. I've supported AW as a member for a long time, and this year I've increased my commitment to AW as Chairman of the Safety Committee.



### Tim Kelley Potsdam, NY

The past six years have flown by. I've been on the Safety Committee all six, and the chairman four years (I stepped down while deployed to Afghanistan). My major contributions to AW's Safety Program include: helping improve the accident database by streamlining accident reporting, which gives online

access to detailed reports in a few weeks instead of months or years; helping bring a comprehensive approach to risk management for flow studies and other on-water events; writing numerous safety articles for the AW Journal; and giving safety presentations and clinics to paddling clubs and other groups in return for donations to AW. Accident investigation remains a passion and an area I plan to continue working to improve.

I've served five years on the Stewardship Committee, having focused on Colorado access issues and FERC licensing settlements in New York. Cheesman Canyon on the South Platte in CO was my first experience. I had not planned on starting negotiations by getting hauled into court, but after a year of negotiating, the issue was resolved with an understanding that benefited all parties. It was a time consuming, but a rewarding experience. In New York I've been able to support Kevin Colburn on FERC settlements for Ausable Chasm and High Falls on the Saranac and also take the lead for AW on the execution of the FERC settlement for the Stone Valley section of the Raquette River, just 10 miles from my home.

I've also served a year on the Executive Committee. I will not pretend that reading budget spreadsheets or doing monthly (at times weekly) conference calls was enjoyable, but it gave me a true picture of how AW really works.

The last two years have been especially rewarding for me. I have been a catalyst for many of the changes that have helped AW return to solid financial footing. When I return from Afghanistan in February '07, just in time for spring runoff, with your vote, I look forward to serving AW for a third term. Be safe and God bless. 

# The Last Word

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## A Creek By Any Other Name

By Ambrose Tuscano

So there you have it, our annual creekin' issue. Seventy-four pages devoted to those of you pushing the limits of your group, yourself, or even your sport. You may notice that my previous sentence tiptoes delicately around defining creeks or creek boating. That's because I'm not really sure it matters whether creekin' refers to streams with flows under 500 cfs, or those with gradients above 100 feet per mile. It isn't really important whether a creek is Class I or Class VI, whether it's remote or roadside, raging brown or crystalline blue. A few years ago, I may have gone in for one or more of these strict definitions. I might have felt like excluding from the creekin' club anyone who wasn't paddling tight, technical Class IV or harder. I might have said the bare minimum cutoff was the Big Sandy or the Watagua or Fordyce Creek. I might have suggested that you can't be creekin' on the Gauley, Tuolumne or Payette, the Yough, Nantahala or South American.

Today, the older (definitely), wiser (maybe) me is starting to think about the logic behind defining creekin', behind artificially classifying some kind of exclusive tribe of creekers who travel the globe doing something qualitatively different than us weekend warriors. My shift in opinion started right about the time I began to diversify my interests. One year I was a Kayaker, that rare creature intent only on hunting down and navigating challenging whitewater. I thought nothing of driving six or eight hours so long as I got to spend two hours of that day in my boat, banging down a creek.

But after spending a winter in snow country, I picked up some nasty habits. First it was skiing—both cross country and downhill—then biking—both

mountain and road—then running, sea kayaking and hiking. Before I knew it, my kayak was spending five months a year on the sidelines while I skied my heart out. Then in the warm months I would think long and hard about driving ridiculous distances to boat if there were other outdoor opportunities right out my back door. Hopefully you don't need any reminders about global climate change (see page 13 of this issue) to understand why this is important.

What does any of this have to do with creekin', you ask. This: When I branched out into other outdoor pursuits I realized that I could achieve similar happiness on a 40-mile road bike ride, a 10-mile hike or a five-mile creek run. Nothing I've ever experienced provides the same rush as challenging whitewater. But I've also learned that challenging myself in

almost any outdoor activity can produce the kind of satisfying feeling that helps get me through my week. Learning that it is challenge that I enjoy, not just adrenaline, creekin' has given me a better perspective. I don't have to be doing something that's as dangerous or manky as I possibly can in my kayak in order to enjoy it.

Challenges come in many shapes and sizes. Leaving my ego aside, the definition of a creek seems more arbitrary, less important. I realize that whatever challenges me on a given day is creekin' for me. Tomorrow I may not feel comfortable on the same run that I did today, but I'll be creekin' all over again! 

---

*The author hiking the headwaters of the Merced.*

Photo by Megan Seifert



# Corporate Sponsors

Each day American Whitewater faces new challenges that threaten our whitewater rivers. To aid us in this fight, we rely on support from members, donors, foundations and partners in the industry.

Companies throughout the whitewater and outdoor industries are stepping forward to support AW's River Stewardship work.

American Whitewater urges you not to make purchase decisions blindly. When you buy your next piece of outdoor gear there are many factors to consider: quality, dependability, comfort, safety and fashion. American Whitewater hopes you will add one more consideration to this list: corporate responsibility.

Support companies that support your rivers.



Immersion Research is a kayaking gear company based in Confluence, PA. Our business was founded in 1997 by two career kayakers, and since that day we have had one focus: to make the best, most innovative kayaking gear on the planet. Our company is also staffed by kayakers who love the sport as much as you do, and every day we work to make sure that you get the best gear and customer service possible.

Immersion Research is proud to be an AW Corporate Partner. As the first such partner in the industry, we realized the value that AW has in all of our lives. If not for the tireless work and contributions of the fine AW employees, members and stewards, we may not even be in business. If we don't have access to the places we love to paddle, then there wouldn't be a need for great, innovative gear.

We, as a company, have worked closely with AW to promote the value in membership and active participation in its causes, which

are ultimately our common cause. We also work with AW as individuals to promote and ensure proper access and egress to and from our favorite places. Currently, co-owner and co-founder of Immersion Research, John Weld, is volunteering a significant amount of time and effort to reach an agreement concerning the rights of paddlers in the Blackwater Canyon, a world class steep creeking destination in the Canaan Valley of West Virginia. Roger Loughney, our Sales and Service Guru, has been working locally to increase boater access to the Ohiopyle Falls, a clean and (mostly) friendly 18-20 footer just upstream of the put-in for the Lower Youghiogheny. Currently, access is limited to three weekends per year.

Our corporate and personal contributions are a small part of a much larger whole that we are proud to be a part of. We thank you, the members of the boating community and American Whitewater, for your support of AW and IR. 

*IR Founders, Kara and John Weld right at home.*





In 2005, and again in 2006, NRS will show their commitment to river stewardship through encouraging AW membership at river festivals nationwide.



In 2006 Keen's contributions will aid American Whitewater in its quest to restore ecological health and recreational opportunities to the Catawba River watershed in North and South Carolina.



Clif Bar's annual Flowing Rivers campaign, that provides funding to AW's affiliate clubs for river stewardship projects, is now in its fourth year.



Fortress International Watches is new to the scene and new to supporting American Whitewater. Through creative fundraising strategies Fortress will help AW seek the funds needed to advocate for all whitewater rivers.



As part of Jackson Kayak's focus on environmental responsibility, they are supporting AW's work by encouraging membership growth in the organization.



In turning the pages of *North Carolina Rivers & Creeks*, it's easy to see how many fantastic rivers AW has had a hand in opening up to paddling. We support AW in hopes that there will be more great rivers to tell about in future editions, and more river lovers out there working with AW to preserve the rivers we all love!



*Kayak Session* helps American Whitewater increase membership, fund river stewardship work, and get our message out to readers here and abroad. *KS* is proud to provide AW members a discounted subscription rate.



Chaco helps set the standard for industry responsibility by supporting causes near to their hearts with 3% of after-tax profits.



We love donating to river conservation organizations like AW. Being partners with American Whitewater allows each of us to do what we do best; AW is a leader in river conservation and Werner Paddles can focus on being the leading kayak paddle manufacturer.



Stahlsac helps AW make sure our lifetime members are satisfied by providing all of our lifetime members with their paddler duffel.



Girls at Play donates \$.50 to AW for each Girls at Play DVD sold and actively promotes AW membership to participants of the Girls at Play Summer Tour. Anna Levesque, the founder of Girls at Play, is proud to be an AW Athlete Ambassador.



Kokatat remains one of AW's strongest allies by continuing support of AW's membership and river stewardship programs.



**WAVE SPORT**

Wavesport donations help AW have the resources it needs to conserve and restore our whitewater resources.



Throughout the history of the natural world, water sources have been the centers of life, providing habitat and sustenance for animals and plants alike. Patagonia is proud to support groups like American Whitewater that work to reverse the destructive effects of damming, development and pollution.



Outdoorplay is proud to support American Whitewater's river stewardship work and has done so for three years now. Outdoorplay.com, along with many other retailers nationwide, provides discounts for American Whitewater members on their website.



In 2004 Teva named American Whitewater as their river stewardship partner and has been one of our strongest supporters of river access and conservation since.



In 2006 Smith Optics continues its support of American Whitewater's river stewardship work and membership.

# Join



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER Today!

American Whitewater has been extraordinarily fortunate in our ability to leverage a strong grassroots base—members and other volunteers—to assist our limited staff with many whitewater river conservation and restoration efforts.



Over the years, American Whitewater volunteers have participated in numerous hydropower meetings as well as instream and recreational flow studies; filed comments and assisted with an uncountable number of filings; appeared as expert witnesses; lobbied; worked to fight new dams, remove existing dams, deny licenses, and improve public access to rivers and streams. In nearly every river stewardship issue AW has been involved with, the outcome has been favorable to paddlers. Not only has AW secured favorable decisions for the paddling community, but we are the only national organization representing paddlers as these decisions are being made.

A growing membership base is crucial to our ability to continue with our work. Some studies show that there are currently over 100,000 whitewater paddlers in the U.S. American Whitewater currently has 6,300 active members. When considering the amount of whitewater river miles that AW has had a direct impact on, this membership number is unimpressive. We need all paddlers to join American Whitewater. If you are a member, please

be sure that everyone you paddle with understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

Membership support is what will determine our ability to continue our river stewardship work in the years to come. Individual Annual Memberships are only \$35. If you are a member of your local paddling club and your club is an Affiliate Club member of AW, join as a Club Affiliate Individual for \$25. This is a tank of gas or an inexpensive night out. This is certainly not too much to pay to have a national organization representing your paddling interests all across the country.

Join on-line today at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership>, call 1-866-BOAT4AW (866-262-8429), or fill out the form on the back of this page and mail it to:

Membership  
P.O. Box 1540  
Cullowhee, NC 28723



P.O. Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723 • 866-BOAT-4AW

### Membership Application

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Club Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

#### Individual Membership Levels

- \$25 Junior (under the age of 18)
- \$25 Individual for Affiliate Club Members (SAVE \$10 if you are also a member of an AW Affiliate Club)
- \$35 Individual One Year
- \$45 Family (immediate family members excluding children over the age of 18)
- \$65 Two Year Membership
- \$100 Ender Club\* (Receive AW's annual Ender Club T-shirt FREE)
- \$150 Five Year Membership
- \$250 Platinum Paddler\* (Receive AW's exclusive Patagonia Platinum Paddler Hooded Sweatshirt FREE)
- \$750 Lifetime Membership (Receive AW's Lifetime Membership Paddler Duffle FREE)
- \$1,000 Legacy Membership\* (Receive AW's exclusive Kokatat Gore-tex Paclite Paddling Jacket and Pants FREE)

\* A portion of your contribution may be tax deductible. If you would like information about the tax deductibility of your contribution please speak with an AW Staff Member.

#### Organizational Membership Types

\$75.00 Affiliate Club (Join our growing network of paddling organizations across North America)

#### Additional Donation

\$5.00  \$10.00  \$25.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other

\$24.99 Kayak Session subscription (Add Kayak Session to your membership at a 40% discount)

#### Amount

Membership subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Do NOT Mail me the AW Journal. I will read it on-line.

Donation subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Do NOT share my name with like-minded groups.

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Ender Club and Platinum Paddler indicate shirt size (S, M, L, XL, XXL). We will mail gift certificate for Kokatat gear.

#### Transaction Type

Cash  Charge  Check# (payable to American Whitewater)

Card Type: MC Visa Discover AMEX

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on card \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

# Affiliate Clubs

# AW's Original Purpose

by Carla Miner

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of AW's existence. AW's original purpose since 1957 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. AW's relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. Over 100 clubs are now AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club consider joining one.

This is the fourth year that Clif Bar makes possible the AW / Clif Bar Flowing Rivers grants. Paddling clubs must be current AW Affiliate Clubs to be eligible for these \$500 grants. Clubs across the country have embarked on many wonderful programs as a result of this program (See Nov/Dec 2005 *AW Journal*). Make sure your club is an AW Affiliate Club and encourage them to apply for this grant for a local project important to paddlers in your area.

AFFILIATE CLUBS, we want to know what you are doing. Send your events to us at [ben@amwhitewater.org](mailto:ben@amwhitewater.org) and we will include them in the Journal.

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by State:

## **Alaska**

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

## **Alabama**

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

## **Arkansas**

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

## **California**

Central CA Canoe Club (C4), Nevada City  
Chico Paddle Heads, Chico  
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus  
River Touring Section, Angeles Chapter  
Shasta Paddlers, Redding

## **Colorado**

Avid4Adventure Inc., Boulder  
Colorado White Water Association, Englewood  
Grand Canyon Priv. Boat. Assn, Englewood  
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs  
Rocky Mountain Canoe Club, Englewood  
University of Colorado Kayak Club, Boulder

## **Florida**

North Florida Whitewater Assoc., Ocala

## **Georgia**

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta  
Georgia Canoeing Association, Atlanta  
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation, Atlanta  
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay

## **Idaho**

Idaho Whitewater Assoc., Boise

## **Illinois**

Chicago Whitewater Assoc., Chicago

## **Indiana**

Ohio Valley Whitewater Club, Evansville  
Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis

## **Iowa**

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

## **Kansas**

Kansas Whitewater Association, Mission

## **Kentucky**

Bluegrass Wildwater Association, Lexington  
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville  
Bardstown Boaters, Frankfort

## **Maine**

AMC/Maine Chapter, Portland  
Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society,  
Topsham  
Outward Bound, Newry

## **Maryland**

Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Kingsville

## **Massachusetts**

Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont  
AMC - New Hampshire Paddlers,  
Honover

## **Minnesota**

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater  
Charlie Sawyer, Maple Plain

## **Missouri**

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

## **Montana**

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

## **Nevada**

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

## **New Hampshire**

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

## **New Jersey**

The Paddling Bares, Milltown

## **New Mexico**

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

## **New York**

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady  
FLOW Paddlers Club, Rochester  
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining  
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia  
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Dunkirk  
KCCNY, New York

## **N. Carolina**

Appalachian State University, Boone  
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh  
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Indian Trail  
Warren Wilson College, Asheville  
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville  
Watauga Paddlers, Boone

## **Ohio**

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

## **Oregon**

Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland  
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton  
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis  
Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland  
North West Rafters Asso, Portland

## **Pennsylvania**

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf  
Bens Creek Canoe Club, Johnstown  
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg  
Conewago Canoe Club, York  
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz  
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley  
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia  
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh  
Pine Creek Valley Wildwater Association, Jersey Shore  
Lehigh Valley Whitewater Club, Lehigh Valley

## **S. Carolina**

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville  
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

### Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Gray  
Eastman Hiking and Canoeing, Kingsport  
E. Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge  
Memphis Whitewater, Memphis  
Tennessee Scenic River Assoc., Nashville  
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga  
University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville  
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville

### Texas

Bayou Whitewater Club, Houston  
paddletexas.com, San Antonio  
Houston Canoe Club, Houston  
Kayak 4 a Kure, Amarillo

### Utah

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

### Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

### Virginia

Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Reston  
Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynch Station  
Canoe Cruisers Association, Arlington  
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond  
FORVA, Roanoke

### Washington

NW Whitewater Assoc., Spokane  
Outdoor Adventure Club, Redmond  
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle  
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane  
University Kayak Club, Seattle  
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle  
Washington Recreation River Runners, Renton  
Whitman College Whitewater Club, Walla Walla  
Venturing Crew 360, Snohomish  
The Mountaineers, Seattle

### West Virginia

West VA Wildwater Assoc., S. Charleston  
Friends of the Cheat, Kingwood

### Wisconsin

Hoofers Outing Club, Madison  
NE Wisconsin Paddlers Inc. Appleton  
Pure Water Paddlers, Eau Claire  
Sierra Club / John Muir Chapter, LaCrosse

### Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

### Canada, Ontario

Madawaska Kanu Camp Inc., Ottawa

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

## Discounted AW Memberships for Affiliate Club Members

by Carla Miner  
Membership Coordinator

AW offers discounted AW memberships to whitewater enthusiasts who are also members of one of our Affiliate Clubs.

We supply a unique code that will automatically offer the discounted membership specific to your club allowing individuals to receive the discount on the normal AW membership renewal form or online at [www.americanwhitewater.org/membership](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership).

Both options work equally well and help make life easier for members of your club.

Discount codes are in place for all AW Affiliate Clubs and many members are enjoying the benefits of joining or renewing their individual AW membership for only \$25.

If you are interested in taking advantage of the Affiliate Club discount, please contact me and I will be happy to let you know your Club's unique code. I can be reached at: 866-BOAT-4AW or [membership@amwhitewater.org](mailto:membership@amwhitewater.org).

## Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

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

1. Receive the *American Whitewater Journal*, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
2. Join the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly *AW Journal*.
3. List club events in the *AW Journal*.
4. Your Club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Have technical expertise for your Club conservation and access committees 'on tap.'
6. Have access to technical and onsite assistance for your Club's event planning.
7. Enjoy VIP benefits for "Joint Members" at AW events.
8. Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions.
9. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
10. Eligible to apply for a spot in the AW 2006 River Stewardship Institute.

**For more information,**  
contact Carla Miner at  
[membership@amwhitewater.org](mailto:membership@amwhitewater.org)  
or sign-up on-line at:  
[www.americanwhitewater.org/membership](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership)

# Guidelines for Contributors



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and distances are correctly calculated.

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

American Whitewater is a nonprofit; the editors and contributors to American Whitewater are not reimbursed. On rare occasions, by 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.

Send your material to:  
Journal Editor  
P.O. Box 1540  
Cullowhee, NC 28723  
E-mail: [editor@amwhitewater.org](mailto:editor@amwhitewater.org)

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The logo for Endless River Adventures, featuring a circular emblem with a river scene and the text 'ENDLESS RIVER ADVENTURES' around the perimeter. Below the emblem are three wavy lines representing water.



SMART CHOICES...



Jud Keiser, Team NRS, on the North Fork of the Yuba, CA. © Mike Hood/NRS



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Tonya Fox drops into the vertical liquid habitat of Oh Be Joyful creek, Colorado. Photo: Nikki Keilley