

BOWLINES

Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association March/April 1999

Spring Clinic News

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The BWA Clinic.....Fun, Learning, and Boating on a Wild & Beautiful River!

Don Spangler

Students running Nemo Rapid, an exciting class III rapid, at the BWA Clinic

For almost 20 years the Bluegrass Wildwater Association of Lexington, Kentucky has hosted an annual weekend beginner whitewater clinic for decked and open boat paddlers. This April 24th & 25th the BWA will return to our most popular clinic site at the Obed-Emory river system near Wartberg, Tennessee (about 3 hours south of Lexington, Ky.).

The clinic consists of a weekend of instruction, camping and meals right on the river. The clinic campground is located at the takeout for the section of the Obed/Emory River that is paddled at the clinic. Students drive to the clinic site on Friday night and set up camp ready for an early breakfast and start on Saturday. Saturday instruction starts at one of the slackwater river pools with basics such as safety, paddle strokes, simple river maneuvers are worked on. A rapid or two is generally run by all at the end of the day so students can put into practice some of the things they worked on that day. At the takeout there are snacks, followed by a big evening meal as well as off the river fun to start the Saturday night river party.

Sunday morning comes all too soon for many. Sore muscles and staying up too late telling river stories makes the river breakfast coffee all the more appreciated. For most students a review and some more work on

Continued on page 3

Saturday May 8th. Red River Tire Round-up

The Red River Tire Round-up is scheduled for Saturday May 8th. The first group of boaters will leave from the Big Branch put-in at 8:00 AM, with a second group following at 10:00 AM. Camping is available. The trash is already bagged and just needs transportation along with approximately 100 tires that will be floated out using milk-jugs and inner tubes. This is a difficult day both physically and technically so all participants need to be capable of handling class III rapids. The organizers are not responsible for boater safety although we will postpone the clean up if the river becomes dangerous. For more information contact Russ Miller at (606) 668-6454.

(Editors note: This our backyard and is a good way to "pay your dues" to the river gods.)

Learned How to Brace

(to the tune of I Saw the Light)

I paddled so aimless, life filled with sin
Wouldn't let the clinics instruction sink in
Then Jesus came and smacked me on the face
Praise the Lord I learned how to brace!

Learned how to brace
Learned how to brace
No more swimming with mud on my face
Now I'm so happy, I'm not a basket case
Praise the Lord I learned how to brace!

Just like a blind man I wandered alone
Worries and fears I kept for my own
I feel like the tortoise that won that famous race
Praise the Lord I learned how to brace!

Learned how to brace
Learned how to brace
No more swimming with mud on my face
Now I'm so happy, I'm not a basket case
Praise the Lord I learned how to brace!

I was a fool, paddled alone
Everytime I flipped my boat would be gone
Now I'm so happy, no more boats to chase
Praise the Lord I learned how to brace!

Learned how to brace
Learned how to brace
No more swimming with mud on my face
Now I'm so happy, I'm not a basket case
Praise the Lord I learned how to brace!

BWA Classified

Aquaterra Sea Lion Sea Kayak, like new condition, always stored indoors. Fast and stable. Flotation, 218cm paddle, rudder, compass, bilge pump, spray skirt, Yakima rack carriers. Asking \$900, replacement cost over \$1600. Call Dan at 606-223-1834.

BOWLINES

Bowlines is the Newsletter of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, POB 4231, Lexington Ky, 40544

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	Amy Shipman	606-278-4236
Past President	Bruce Rishel	606-245-8096

Join in on the Fun!

BWA website: www.surfbwa.org
Join the BWA! BWA Membership \$15/individual; \$20/Family year entitles you to receive the newsletter, 10% discounts at many local and out of state outfitter shops, use of club kayak, discount at pool rolling sessions, a listing in the BWA Handbook, and a stream gauge guide.

Meetings are held the at 7:30, the second Tuesday of each Month at:
Buckhead Mt. Grill, 2305 Nicholasville Rd., Lexington, Ky.

Submission of Newsletters articles preferred on zip or floppy disk (Mac or PC) or typed. Pictures can be digital or ready to be scanned. Please included stamped envelope for return. Files can also be e-mailed to: donspang@aol.com or to princv@sprynet.com



Caney Fork from pg.11

Fork. There is no access road to the river through the recently donated state property.

The Friends of Scott's Gulf that worked to encourage Bridgestone-Firestone to make the donation to the state is working to get the remainder of the Bridgestone-Firestone land donated. Bridgestone-Firestone has stated that they want to take the next one and a half to two years to evaluate their options for the rest of their property and develop a strategy which could include donation to the state. We will also discuss the issue of nonmotorized access on the Scott's Gulf Road by boaters and hikers in the interim period.

Please honor the no trespassing signs! Boaters and hikers have not caused problems in the past; let's keep it that way. We need to keep a long-term focus and work to gain permanent access through state ownership. Your cooperation in the interim will help us in negotiating with the company.

Chuck Estes
American Whitewater and Friends of Scott's Gulf
(423) 482-7374

The Clinic. The BWA way to learn how to paddle

skills is worked on while running some more rapids. By mid to late afternoon on Sunday many of the students are ready to give mighty "Nemo" a try. Some have a success run of the rapid, others a successful swim of the rapid. But, whatever the case, it puts a great ending to a fun weekend.



The put-in for the clinic is at the confluence of the Obed and the Emory rivers.

The Obed-Emory River System

Pristine, wild, and beautiful are words that are often used to describe this system of streams and rivers. It is a paddlers paradise with some 140 miles of boatable waters (only about 44 miles are protected). The Obed is the only Wild and Scenic River in Tennessee and the only one managed by the National Park service in the southeast.

The Emory-Obed begins as small tributaries on top of the Cumberland Plateau. As the streams and creeks hurry down the escarpment to the lowlands they cut into the sandstone to create the rugged beauty of spectacular bluffs and gorges with tumbling



Lily Bridge is the take out for the famous 3 1/2 mile technical Class II trip that can be fun even at low water. It is the put in for the classic class III+ run to Nemo

rapids and waterfalls. Most of the river corridor is forested with stands of mature hardwoods and evergreens. The rugged nature of area has caused it to have few encroachments by man into the river system corridor.

The boundaries of the Wild and Scenic protect sections of the Emory and the Obed and two tributaries of the Obed: Clear Creek and Daddys Creek. Many other wonderful (unprotected) runs are in the system: Crab Orchard Creek, Island Creek, White Creek, as well as my favorite whitewater run in the system, Crooked Fork Creek. There are at least 18 sections that can be run with difficulties from class II to class V. There are sections that can be run as low as 320 cfs and others you need a gage reading of at least 10,00 to 15,000 cfs. to consider a good run. There are runs that are just a couple of miles long, there are others that you will need to allow all day. No wonder this area has been a BWA favorite for over two decades!

One gage, the one at oakdale can give you a very good idea of which runs to do. This changes a bit in the



Out club prez, Bill Lynch, right on line at Jacks Rock on Clear Creek the Friday before the Clinic in 1998.

summer when the water tends to localize more depending on where the thunderstorm rained. You may have to do a little scouting to decide what tributary is best to paddle.

If you plan to paddle in the Emory-Obed, spend \$12.00 and get Monte Smith's classic book "A Paddler's Guide to the Obed/Emory Watershed". It is packed with information about the river system as well as great stories from the early days of running the Obed/Emory! Other good information can be obtained from the rangers at the NPS station in Wartberg. Stream flow information can be viewed at http://tenn.er.usgs.gov/rtcgi/gen_stn_pg?station=03540500 or call 1-800-238-2264 for voice recorded information.

Don Spangler

Back-paddling thru the pages of the Bowlines....

Passing On the Tradition

"What's this club all about anyway? "What do I get if I join?" These are but a couple of questions posed by people I talk to who are curious about our club. At first I'm usually frustrated by anyone who would ask such elementary questions. The basic answer, I feel, is to pass on an ever growing tradition. To be a good whitewater boater takes some skill that can be learned in a weekend, some practice at what you've learned, and then hooking up with a group of boaters who can pass on the tradition of river education. This river education is best passes on from one to the next, not by book or film, but by taking that novice and inviting him to go with you. Try to lead and then all you can and encourage then in what they do well. This tradition of helping is what encouraged me in the sport. A few well placed phone calls, invites on trips, and finally someone taking me under their wing for a paddling season.

Since then I've had great respect for this effort. And since then I've picked someone each year and helped them along the best I could by just trying to pass along the tradition.....

Sam Moore, Bowlines Oct. 1981

A Few Waves Back

His voluminous C boat may have looked like a umiak, but the towering, bespeckled character who paddled it was definitely not an eskimo.

The water boiled from the savage strokes of the blonde manning the bow of the canoe. In the stern the "Commandant" ruddered along easily to demonstrate how an upstream ferry should be carried out.

Looking like a misplaced gondolier, this fine muscled specimen stood upright in his canoe and surfed back and forth through the waves with careless aplomb.

This bristle-faced kayaker wanted to run Cumberland Falls, but found the Gauley more manageable.

One of the first confirmed C-boaters in the BWA, this skinny, four-eyed could almost always be found driving his orange VW bus in any caravan headed for a river. The finely conditioned brunette who usually accompanied him played a key role in keeping both him and the BWA on course.

With a smile that lit the sunrise, this well endowed nurse/kayaker was last seen headed for the river in her 4 wheel drive pickup.

This common cast of characters has one thing in common: they are some of the now absent (and missed) founders of the BWA. (The list is by no means exhausted.)

In case the descriptions are insufficient, their names are: Mike Murphy, Barb Stansbury, Bob Shelinger, Dave Moccia, Doug McKenzie, Kent Kurchner, Katie Keen and Sally Stoltz.

John Eisenberg, Bowlines, January/February, 1980



"Hey! Listen to this dumb article: "90 percent of all canoe damage happens on dry land".....Ha!...."

From Bowlines, June/July 1979

Reflections from a new member:

A little over a year ago I joined BWA. At that their point in time I thought I was a good paddler. The last year has proven that completely wrong, and I'm still not as good as I thought I was a year ago.

In the last year my swimming has improved immeasurably, the number of cuts and bruises that my body sustained definitely reveals that boating is a contact sport, and my suburban neighbors are pooling their money to either pay for a lawyer for my wife or an analyst for me. Some of the time, usually after a long cold swim, I think that if they got me a shrink I'd use him. But be it due to low monoamine oxidase, high catecholamines or just lack of good sense, I do love it.

I would also like to thank all of you that have given me support be it moral or physical over the last year. But I owe a special thanks to Sam, Terry and Don for helping this floundering C-1er through his roughest times.
Wayne Catron, Bowlines, May/June 1980

A Look at the Paddling Clinic

Sage, a local river outfitter conducted classes on various forms of river paddling, canoeing and kayaking for many years. Since Sage dissolved earlier this year, our club saw a need and responsibility to carry on instruction in river paddling technique and safety. Our first venture, as a club project into teaching was heralded as an enigma of success. Several suggestions for future clinics are contained in a separate article by Sam Moore.

The clinic was not advertised, but mainly offered to friends on a non-fee basis.

Have you seen...
by Moore & AtLee



Bowlines, Feb. 1983

The response was overwhelming with approximately 40 students and instructors participating. The organization committee closely watched water levels on many rivers during the week prior to the clinic in hopes of picking the proper river conditions for novice paddlers. The Big South Fork of the Cumberland was chosen with some reluctance (a sudden TVA gage reading increase up to 12,000 cfs) but turned out to be surprisingly great for teaching. The level at Leatherwood bridge was approximately 3,500 cfs and provided a rather long pool upstream of the bridge that was used for initial instruction and practice on Saturday morning. Saturday afternoon, the clinic paddled further upstream to a small river wide rapid that provided extensive opportunities for practice on ferrying, eddy turns, surfing and yes, even lots of rescues! Don Spangler can attest to that. Late in the afternoon it was time for a swim. Many of the students and instructors made their way upstream of the rapid, jumped in and swam (feet up) down through the rapids, waves and small hole to be rescued by rope throwing learners. Fortunately no one actually needed rescuing since a few ropes got tossed in, complete with both ends. Dinner that evening at Tobes Restaurant in Oneida, Tenn. was very good but a tad short on supply.

Sunday was a near fiasco. Plans were to run a 5 mile section of the BSF, taking out at Leatherwood. We drove a road that could have doubled for the secret take out on Cumberland below the falls. It was a definite class V run. The rains came and created a stream in the road almost deep enough to paddle. By the time we reached the railroad ties the water level was too high for open boats, so we turned around and drove back out.

On the way out of Leatherwood, Roger Ottersback won the "John Eisenberg Driving Award" when he got caught in a keeper hole! Roger was paddling on his off side and attempted to miss a small, insignificant hole in the middle of the road when a monster sucked him in on the extreme road right. (*editors note: This excuse was used several years later by another notorious driver looking for a new put-in sometime after mid-night.*)

Fortunately the only damage was a little pride and Joe and Ruths' Restaurant was unanimously voted as the next area to stop and scout. Many thanks go to those who invested their time to organizing and or teaching, but especially to Sam Moore for all his hard work prior to the clinic.

Terry Weeks, Bowlines June/July 1979



Old BWA Logo circa 1981

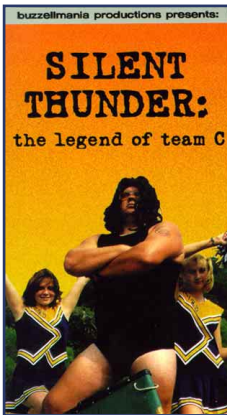
1999 National Paddling Film Festival Wrap-up

For the 1999 National Paddling film Festival, It was a sweet 16th birthday party . We raised more money for waterway conservation in 1999 than in 15 previous festivals.

Companies, services and businesses from the paddlesport industry generously gave more this year than in any other. The filmmakers, videographers and image artists contributed some of the most moving, exciting, hilarious and innovative entries in the history of the NPFF. The audience, the volunteers and the judges salute the artists for creating posters, images and videos that allowed us to laugh, be amazed and ponder the consequences of our sport as never before. The NPFF wishes to honor and reward the talent, creativity and enhancement of paddlesports by the artists because without their entries there can be no show. And so the winners are...



Silent Thunder - The Legend of Team C
Winner Best of NPFF Amateur Division / Winner Humor Category



An in-depth look at a team of boaters the corporate kayak world wouldn't sponsor in a million years. A group that checked their egos at the door long, long ago. The result? A few laughs, a couple of interviews and an elite group of skilled and moderately skilled boaters taking their shot at fame and unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your view) getting pummeled on some of the country's best whitewater.

Ric Gusic along with the boys and girls of Buzzlemania Productions, of Aspinwall,PA totally boofed the competition in 1999. The audience and judges couldn't remain silent and thundered their approval by overwhelming voting it their favorite of the festival. Taking a sometimes brilliant, hilarious look at big time professional paddling Ric, and his cast of wanna be rodeo stars and the "human highlight machine" have created a can't miss video for whitewater paddlers. There wasn't a dry eye in the house from laughter when the newly created paddling diva Floyd Turbo displayed his ample physic and talents in an outrageous spoof of freestyle canoeing. When the video ended at the festival an overwhelmed audience member leapt to his feet and begged Floyd, who was sitting in the audience, for his autograph. Floyd graciously complied. A star is born. "Average Joe Boater" rules! Great job Ric. 8 out of 14 amateur and professional Judges picked it as their favorite of the fest. Here's some of their comments: "It actually had a story line. The carnage shots were right on the money - just enough" ; ""The video had a personality with real, instead of surreal boaters."; "Good special effects. Liked

seeing older paddlers"; "Very honest. Good wound shots"; "Hip with the audience"; "Very original - lots of laughs, Do more next year!"

For a quicktime movie of Silent Thunder click on this address or go to:
<http://www.surfbwa.org/movies/silentT.mov>

For a free quicktime viewer for your computer go to
<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/index.html>

To buy Silent Thunder and many other videos that participated In the NPFF go to:
<http://www.surfbwa.org/npff/videosales.html>

Significant Consequences: the image of paddling from both sides of the lens
Winner Best of NPFF Professional Division / Winner Pro Open Category

A gripping editorial/documentary that looks at whitewater paddling in 1998, the increased deaths of paddlers, river accidents and the documentation of this. Includes a spellbinding segment of a near death experience of a kayaker in Western Quebec. The video is meant to be both enlightening and thought provoking. The tone is sincere and quite somber.



In posthumously awarding Lynn Clark Best of Festival honors, the audience and judges confirmed that this gifted and talented videographer who so shockingly lost her life on the Ottawa River a scant 3 weeks before the film festival will continue to touch paddlers with her work. In this, her final creation, Lynn probes territory that will affect paddlers on all levels and leave them reflecting upon their own responsibility to be safe. Truly a lasting testament to her talent and an incredibly timely and powerful video. Judge comments included:

"Well told story. Had the complete attention of the audience" ; "A message that needs to be discussed...touched on issues of safety, group size on rivers, access and mortality."; "What can I say?" ; Across the board excellent"

Whitewater Self Defense
Winner Safety/Instructional Category

Whitewater Self Defense helps kayakers avoid trouble and deal with unexpected problems. The emphasis is "everyday" river safety and rescue, including fundamental skills every whitewater paddler should know. Includes new and proven safety techniques. Contributors include Charlie Walbridge, Ellen Decuir, Kent Ford and over a hundred other paddlers.

Once again the dynamic partnership of Kent Ford, John Davis and Performance Video of Durango, CO have established



their place among the leaders in the production of instructional paddlesport videos. This comprehensive video is so packed with usable safety information that it should belong in every whitewater paddler's library. Destined to be mandatory viewing for beginning boaters, even the wizened veterans of whitewater will benefit. The NPFF paddling club representative judges wrote in their comments: "short, sweet, effective demos"; "a valuable asset to clubs for safety clinic showings, meetings, etc..."; "A truly professional production dealing with an important topic in an excellent manner."; "good use of today's technology to produce an interesting and informative video"

**"La Grande Canyon Whitewater"
Winner Conservation
Category**

An interesting and entertaining look at Washington State's La Grande Canyon of the Nisqually River. The Nisqually is one of several runs around the country that has been opened to boating through the American Whitewater's intervention into the Federal hydroelectric relicensing procedure. This informal video details La Grande's class 4 and 5 rapids in the depths of a spectacular vertical walled canyon while providing a brief background on the project.



Randolph Pierce and Wildside Images of Seattle, WA brings his considerable and fully developed talents to bear in a video that helps to open up and thereby conserve another River for paddlers. In this, his second NPFF entry ("Bob's Hole Video" 1994) Randolph continues to work hard for the Rivers by producing this outstanding, informative entry that will serve as an excellent template and tool in the important quest for paddling stream access. The NPFF Judges sum it up:

"One of the best videos taking all judging criteria into consideration. Not a single weak point"; "Good background info. Excellent description of rapids. Serious and respectful attitude, but with a humorous wink where appropriate."

**Code Red. Team D Freestyle
Winner Promotional Category**

Your mission: Watch. Failure to perform this duty will result in your deportation to some flat country made of sand. Above all, DO NOT show this video to people who suffer from a fear of heights, wussiness or any other condition which may preclude them from living through Team D's Freestyle operatives in action!



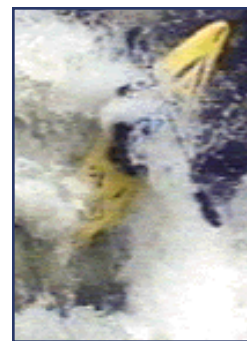
A video from Dagger and Mike Steck of Harriman, TN This video topped the hottest and closest competition of the 99 NPFF in a show that easily makes you forget it's trying to sell you something. Dagger scored well with the judges who wrote:

"A pleasure to watch, technically brilliant"; "Good lead with a focus on responsibility needed now!"; "Didn't go on forever

with terminal cartwheelin!"; "An excellent set of sequenced stills and musical interface"; "Well done"

**SavageV Follow The V
Runner up Promotional Category**

From calmest current to most vertical drop the is the language of flowing water. The downstream is a sweet, fine line that points the way down the river. The upstream is a perfect vortex, folding and swirling, waiting to play. This is Class V whitewater where dedicated, expert paddlers continue to test equipment to the limits of man and machine. This is the essence of our vision: A team of paddlers and designers creating innovative craft of the very highest quality to transform the way people paddle. Follow the V. Presented by SavageV, Inc. a video by Chuck Wayne with production by Tom Fredricks.



On the Sunday following the NPFF's competition and awards party Chuck Wayne and the folks of SavageV went home to NC thinking they had won the competition. So did all of those present at the announcement of the winning entries. Through an unfortunate and inadvertent mistake by a volunteer tabulating the judges scores from the competition Chuck's excellent production was mistakenly identified as the winner. Having scored so high with the judges and been voted on by several in the audience as their "paddler's choice" SavageV's apparent win seemed no surprise. In a routine check of the judges scores just before the final press release the error was discovered. Savage and Chuck were immediately notified of the sorry news. Much to his credit, Chuck remained calm, and measured in his response to the information so obviously causing considerable disappointment. We hope that Chuck and the folks at Savage will again accept our most humble and heartfelt apology for the tough emotional roller coaster ride that the volunteers of the NPFF have given them. While it is not gold, it is the opinion of the NPFF that the score was so close as to justify the awarding of the silver for the Promotional Category. I'm sure the judges would agree. Some wrote:

"Creative shots... good shots from the top of drops"; "Outstanding camera and boat skills displayed in a responsible format promotional [not only] of Savage but also the sport"; "Very creative presentation"

**Virml Creek
Winner Digital Category**

"Virml Creek" is a three-dimensional computer-generated run down a whitewater slalom course. The graphical world is implemented in VRML (Virtual Reality Modeling Language) making it suitable for viewing and exploration on the web. In addition to free-form exploration of the virtual course, "HelmetCam" and "CableCam" views used to produce the images track an animated run down the course.

Mike McGurrin of Vienna, VA creates history at the 1999 NPFF with this win in computer generated digital motion image format. In perhaps a glimpse of the future of paddle-sport depiction Mike has performed a "first descent" and brought us closer to virtual paddling via moving images than

possible with standard video. The judges write: "Cool graphics"; "Great idea. Can you do it for rodeo?"

Rivers Run Through Us

Winner Amateur: Open

"Rivers Run Through Us" is a video about River Enthusiasts of all nature. The audience will encounter images of pristine wildlife,rafters,kayakers plus other exciting well known places and people.It is a fun to watch, good feel'n and entertaining video that any whitewater enthusiast is sure to enjoy! It starts out in the West coast, Montana ,Idaho, Colorado, just to name a few places,and then finishes in West Virginia. All in all it is a "riverdiverse" video!

Tony Beardall of Bozeman, MT in his NPFF debut comes away with a win for a fine effort. The judges agree writing:"Good job overall"; "I thought the computer generated transitions were groovy"; "Good bloopers...loved the pirate raft!"; "Some fun stuff in here!"; "Keep up the good work"

Best Paddling Image 1999 Winner 35mm Slide:

"Scott Bristow in Great Falls"

Julie Keller, Tucker, GA

1999 Best Digital Image: "Surf the Universe"

Keith Aitken, Black Mountain, NC

Keith also won the 5770 Lexmark printer generously donated by Lexmark,Inc of Lexington,KY

Best River Safety Poster age 16-adult:

Gary Hoagland, Newcastle, KY

Best River Safety Poster age 9-15:

Daniel Grimes,Richmond, KY

Best River Safety Poster age 8 and under:

Brooks Hester, Smithfield Elementary, Smithfield, NC

In addition to these winning artists the National Paddling Film Festival committee wishes to acknowledge the contributions of our generous sponsors and donors:

Major Sponsors:

Dagger,Wavesport, Riot, Savage V, Perception, Lotus Designs, Spyderco, Outta Hand Productions, Madawaska Kanu Centre, Pacific Water Sports, Rocky Mountain Outdoor Center, Chums, Formula, Adventure Medical Kits, Kokatat, Kentucky Outdoor Center/ Canoe KY, Performance Video

Significant Donors:

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Thanks again to all of you who have participated this year and in the past. Be aware that by sharing your work and passion with the festival you are directly contributing to the enhancement and conservation of paddlesports. Your help

and generosity in allowing your posters, videos and images to be shared works in perfect harmony alongside your brothers and sisters who have volunteered their sweat, time and enthusiasm to make this festival the incredibly enduring and creative event it is.

Meanwhile, the NPFF is looking for a few good volunteers for the Feb. 2000 show. If you would like to join Y2K NPFF Coordinator Zina Merkin and the rest of us volunteering please contact Zina at:

**NPFF, 120 Victory Ave., Lexington, KY 40502
phone: 268-2508 email) zmerkin@ca.uky.edu
or visit the web: www.surfbwa.org/npff**

Thank you note for our contribution to the Lynn Clark Memorial Scholarship Fund from the Film Fest revenues.

"Thank you for the \$100.00 donation to Lynn's Scholarship Fund for the National Paddling Film Festival. We hope your festival was a good success and thank you for honouring Lynn.

"We are in the midst of a tremendous blizzard at the moment and, as a mother, I wish February would have been like this and we would still have our daughter.

"Please paddle safely and we are thankful for the close bond of the paddling community.

"The kindness you have shown will always be remembered.

"Chuck, Alice, Lori, Lisa, Doug and families."

Longtime BWA member Barry Grimes retires after many years of being the National Paddling Film Festival Coordinator!



A participant in the Film Festival since its beginning days and its Coordinator for most of its history Barry was key in making the Festival grow into the very successful event it is today. His dedication, energy, and leadership is appreciated by the BWA and all those who have participated in the event over the years. Barry, thanks for a job well done...a big BWA hand to you!

A Quest for Adventure, Or White Mice and A Blue Spider!

Marrea Matthews

Blam, blam, blam "I can't believe we're still going up. We've been going up all bloody day!?"

I had seen Paul pick up the front of his bike and slam it down again and again earlier on this forest service road up to Horse Branch Overlook. We had been climbing up and up and up for the past hour. When I first saw Paul doing this to his bike, I thought he was knocking off the snow and mud. But now after over hearing his frustration I knew he was finding his limit. Also, I speculated that he wasn't having fun.

Having fun in this race was the idea I was holding onto tightly. But when would "having fun" begin I wondered.

Here we were only about 10 miles into the bike portion of the N.O.C. Adventure Quest Race and Paul was having a meltdown. It was understandable. We had been climbing most of the 10 miles since leaving the Fontana Lake. To fully appreciate the situation you need to know that Paul had just been introduced to mountain biking about a month ago. On our first training ride, Paul had managed to go a painful 3 miles of the Caney Loop at Cave Run Lake. On his second training session, he survived 7 miles. So at this point in the race Paul had doubled the total distance he had ever ridden on a mountain bike.

So what to do?... We laughed. Later when I passed him slamming his bike again, he claimed it was to knock off the snow and mud. Laughing would be the way we'd pass the next several hours. We had begun to have fun.

The N.O.C. Adventure Quest had begun 8:00 AM Sat. morning March 12, with a 2 mile run up to the commercial putin on the Nantahala. It was at the start of the run that the snow began to fall. The big fluffy flakes quickly turned the banks of the Nantahala white. From the putin we paddled a four person raft to the N.O.C. takeout. Dr. Fred Tuttle, our third team member, swiftly guided the raft down the fastest of the race lines that he had learned over the past 2 decades of canoe racing; we passed raft after raft.

At the takeout we picked up a canoe put in below Wesser Falls. From there we paddled to a designated point on the lake, punched our passport then turned and raced the 2 miles toward the Tsali boat ramp and our transition to the bike portion of the ride. Being in the front of the raft, Paul and I had

gotten drenched until we learned to divert the waves with the front tube. But when we dropped into the hole at Nantahala Falls, anything that hadn't gotten wet now got soaked! On the lake the numbness from the water of the cold Nantahala River spread from my feet to above my knees! Also, my arms were numb from my hands to the elbows. I had experienced being cold on many ski and boating trips before but not as severe as this. I paddled to keep the cold from

spreading. Every paddle stroke Paul and I took was fully powered because we knew every stroke would take us toward warm dry clothes. Though a bit shaky, Paul did wonderfully considering he had canoed only twice before. And once Fred Tuttle kicked in his championship forward stroke in the last two miles, it felt like we were hydroplaning toward the finish. After the water we were in 6th place out of 40 teams!



The total distance of the paddle section of the race has been estimated at about 20 miles. We don't know the total distance of the whole race. The race organizers had only said it was less than 100 miles, but after completing it, we would have a better idea than they had of the total distance.

The bike section began with a 7 1/2 mile single track ride around Mouse Loop. The 4 prior days of rain and this morning's snow made for a slow sticky mess of a ride. Ah, but how we got warm! After leaving Mouse Loop we headed up to Hwy 28. Paul and I found that while carrying packs and gear we could push at least as fast as we could ride up what seems to have been a 40% grade.

From Hwy 28, the directions took us up Horse Branch to a beautiful overlook. It was on this climb up the forest service road that Paul began slamming his bike in disbelief. Learning to laugh at the situation carried us on up to the top and check point 7. Reaching the top picked up our spirits. The tops of the nearby mountains wore skirts of clouds. The snow was 11/2 inches deep due to the higher elevation. This check point had folks with radios who informed others of our progress. Later in the night these manned check points would be key in evacuations of competitors who succumbed to the cold and stress. Before heading on we joked with the boys and inquired about where we'd find the hot tub, they joined in the spirit and said it was in the back of the NOC bus. But in keeping with the race regulations of provide nothing but encouragement to the racers, the check point boys declined the offer of Fig Newtons in exchange for a turn in the tub.

Shortly after leaving cp 7 we were to turn off Horse Branch



at UTM coordinates 391640N 26290E, “follow a faint trail out the ridge, then at a fallen oak tree begin the bushwack descent to a double track and find the next checkpoint at the rock with a painted Blue Spider.” Just how would we find a rock with a painted blue spider when things are covered with snow? Was it something that would take drugs to see? Would we find it before dark? Would the coordinates help?

The UTM (universal transverse mercator) coordinates are used with a compass to locate specific points. The night before we had stayed up til midnight plotting these grid coordinates on the 4 USGS maps we received at the prerace meeting. Our course was to travel over about _ of each USGS map. We had cut and taped the 4 corners into a new map. Fred kept it in a large ziplock bag. I carried directions, and Paul carried the passport that we got stamped at each checkpoint.

Finding the turn off for the bushwack to the Blue Spider was the first test of our team’s navigational skills. The night before we found no matter how many times we carefully checked ourselves while plotting the UTM coordinates we couldn’t get some of the coordinates to land where we knew they should, like the raft put in wasn’t on the river! So at our first bushwack would we start where the UTM was plotted or take what appeared to be a trail? We elected to follow the trail cut through the brush and snow by the 13 teams in front of us.

Out to the fallen oak tree and down to the double track, cross the creeks and find the rock with the painted Blue Spider.

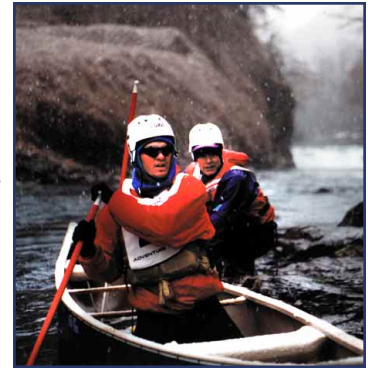


The team and the suport crew

Finding this next checkpoint was not as hard as what I had feared that finding a blue spider in the woods might be. Check point 8 was also manned and it may have been here that our team became known as the “good attitude team.” Jokes of offers to exchange Gatoraide Jel packets for the hot pasta with cheese and a cold beer were declined.

More brake adjustments and then onward to Hwy 28 again and to Tooties Café where we turned in our bikes and began our hiking section. We reached the café just after dark. After laying about and stuffing on brunswick stew for 21/2 hours we were finally off. First through the small community of Stecoah, and up forest service road to Locust Cove, punch

the pass port and follow the tracks in the snow up the bushwack through Deep Gap to forest road 418 and cp11. Joke with the checkpoint folks, mostly at Paul’s expense. Being an Englishman, he was desperately craving a “spot of tea with cream and sugar.” No tea, they drank only premium. It seemed we were forever helping Paul find his equipment, his team number, our passport, or laughing about the weight of his pack.



The brunswick stew hadn’t settled well with either Paul or Fred. I kept hearing Paul through the darkness and fog letting go of what I thought was huge gross burps. I would find him bent over at the waist, his chin lifted high with his upper lip curled and sounding off a bit like a foghorn! It was in the relating of how Paul sounded like a burping yak that I learned he had not been burping at all, instead he had been trying to get rid of the brunswick stew! He thought ditching the stew would make him feel better. But as all good English lads must learn, Paul, too, had learned to hold his brew. And since he hasn’t been able to throw up, not even the brunswick stew! The check point personnel found our stories most amusing and if it hadn’t been against regulations, I’m sure they would have shared a beer with us. After all, they had been waiting to meet us since hearing over their radio that team 11 was a party in motion.

It was in the next stretch that we tired of the bushwacking, falling, briers and limbs scratching and poking and wiping out in the snow. Fred took the best fall, through the air and landed flat on his back in a depression. Fred talked of fatigue and hallucinations of little white mice trotting along as his personal companions. By cp12 the stomach problems had taken its toll on Paul. He hadn’t been able to eat or drink since leaving from the bike transition. He told us he couldn’t continue. He had gone much farther than most expected and he was a treat to be with.

Initially, Fred and I were going to hook up with a large group that had lost members. Out and back, out and back the 10 or so of us trudged, looking for the path through the brush. Only one person in the group attempted to use a map and compass. Finally, out of frustration and embarrassment, I declined to continue. I returned to the checkpoint and reported that I would head out with Paul. The disappointment in not finishing mounted and the tears flowed. It was a good thing it was dark. I had the energy to finish, but not the navigational skills.

Before the race Fred had read a quote of D.H. Lawrence, something about- I have never met an animal in the wild that felt sorry for itself. I didn’t feel sorry, just angry, disappointed, frustrated, Actually, I was energized by the whole event. I absolutely loved it! I had the energy of nuclear power, it was not fatigue, nor injury, nor equipment failure that stopped me. I hadn’t learned to navigate. I get lost in malls, how will I ever find my way by little squiggly green lines on a map?

Back at the checkpoint the situation grew worse. Another team came in with a woman wearing sandwich baggies on her hands. They had let their map get wet and fall apart. So they had followed two women into the checkpoint. The two women wanted to go on alone. The wind, rain and cold quickly took its toll on the woman with the baggies, later I found out her name was Kelly Clark. She stood swaying with her eyes closed, unable to eat the food we gave her. She began to have problems breathing. I pulled out my stove and heated hot chocolate for the growing number of evacuees. We wrapped Kelly in our space blankets and got her into a heated vehicle. Fred hooked up with Kelly's two partners who went on to finish the race.

Getting off the mountain was problematic. One car had landed in a ditch, another had shredded a tire on the sharp rocks. The preceding days of rain had washed out section of the road leaving sharp rocks exposed. Now the temperature had dropped which froze the snow and water into ice.



Responding to treatment, Kelly began warming up on our ride down the mountain. We learned that she and Paul had a lot in common with their lack of experience in mountain biking and canoeing. Both were asked to join the race because of their background with running marathons. In fact Kelly had learned the morning before the race that she'd need to carry some things- like a raft, a canoe and at times a mountain bike. The ride off the mountain passed without an incident, and 5 hours after reaching checkpoint 12 we were out of the woods.

Fred and his two new teammates finish shortly before noon Sunday. Eighteen of the original 40 teams finished. Eight more partial and reconfigured teams also completed. Twelve teams did not finish and 2 did not start. The NOC released to the press the following distances: 22 miles on water, 25 miles on bike and 22 miles for hiking/orienteering. The fastest team "The Teletubbies" finished in 14.56 hours. They were quoted as wanting to cover the most distance possible before dark. The last partial team reached the finish in 29.06 hours. They weren't quoted for anything.

The atmosphere at the dinner and awards reminded me of a class V takeout. The room hummed with the electrical charge that is felt around activities of intensity. Some walked about with a real sense of accomplishment and total satiation, others appeared a bit stunned. Racers excitedly compared notes and inquired about how friends had fared. The real treat was when Kelly came over to say Hi and thanks to Paul and myself.

Now a week has passed. I've talked with Paul, Fred and just hung up from talking with Kelly in Richmond, Va. All are looking forward to the next race. We all talk of what we'll do differently and how we'll be better prepared for our next quest for adventure.

Attention boaters paddling in East Tennessee!!

The takeout on Scott's Gulf Road for the upper Caney Fork River and Bee Creek has been closed! The upper Caney Fork River from Clifty Bridge to the takeout near the Bee Creek junction (approximately 9 miles) is Class IV (V) and is in a very remote river gorge. Bee Creek is Class IV-V and about 7 miles to the Caney Fork confluence. The streams are not often run due to their remoteness, difficulty of rapids, difficult and lengthy shuttles, and no electronic river gauge. However, the upper Caney Fork and Bee Creek are two of the finest wilderness whitewater runs in Tennessee.

The property owner Bridgestone-Firestone Company has recently donated 4,000 acres of their total 15,000 acre tract to the State of Tennessee. The donated property contains the very upper part of the Caney Fork River run (from about mile 1 to mile 4). However, Bridgestone-Firestone still owns the remaining property through which the upper Caney Fork River flows. Scott's Gulf Road is the normal takeout for the upper run. It starts dropping off the plateau near a cemetery and switchbacks a couple of miles down a really badly eroded roadbed to the river. Until about two years ago, a good 4-wheel drive truck could get down the road. The road has deteriorated more recently and most boaters now hike out to a point near the cemetery. Mistakenly most people believed that White County owned the Scott's Gulf Road down to the river and, though not maintained, was a public road open for walking or driving.

It appears that Bridgestone-Firestone owns Scott's Gulf Road as well as the land down to the river. The County's ownership of Scott's Gulf Road ends near the cemetery. Bridgestone-Firestone has now closed the road down to the river through their property. I have talked to Bill Bryant, the head ranger with Bridgestone-Firestone. He confirms that all the remaining Bridgestone-Firestone property is closed to the public. The stated reason for the stepped-up enforcement is that too many 4-wheelers, ATVs and recreationalists of all types are showing up on the property in increasing numbers and the corporation is worried about liability. He said that he and the other rangers will aggressively enforce the no trespassing signs (bright yellow) that have been put up. Recently a group of hikers have been escorted out after they hiked down the Scott's Gulf Road to the river. Though boaters and hikers have generally gotten along well with the Bridgestone-Firestone rangers in the past, Bridgestone-Firestone believes the only way to truly control their property is to close it to all users. Mr. Bryant says that they will be ticketing/fining anyone caught trespassing.

All boaters are requested to not hike or drive on the Scott's Gulf Road past the cemetery to the river! Bridgestone-Firestone may gate the road in the near future. The next takeout is at the Dodson Bridge some 8 miles (mostly flat with some Class I-II) downstream of the Bee Creek junction. Unfortunately, this makes almost a 17 mile trip with a very long shuttle (1 -2 hours for the Caney Fork run). This also adds the same mileage on to the Bee Creek run making it a 15-16 mile run. However, comparatively, the shuttle for Bee Creek to Dodson Bridge would be shorter than for the Caney

North Carolina's Watauga River Access: Your Help is Needed!

This is a river access situation that definitely affects paddlers. Just ask Dennis Huntley of the Carolina Canoe Club. His van got towed at the put-in for the Nationally known Watauga Gorge on Guys Ford Road(SR1200). Also, remember, this is the take-out of an easier up-stream section. N.C. DOT plans to pave this road and replace the bridge. This provides a great opportunity to develop a formal, public access to the river at this location. In similar situations on the Haw River, letters of support for an access area were requested from organizations, for example, but not from individuals. However, this time the N. C. DOT project engineer says that he would like to see individual letters of support. An effort is also underway to develop an official Public Access to Streams and Rivers program in North Carolina. The support that we get for the Watauga Access will definitely carry over to our state-wide effort.

With the AWA working on the Gorge take-out, this leaves the put-in needing to be solved. You can refer to Bob Benner's Carolina White Water Watauga River Sections Four and Five or other guide books to refresh your memory or become more familiar with the area.

These points are only suggestions (and may not all apply to you) for your letter. Use your own words, do not copy mine over or mass produce a letter. Please take time to write because the next access issue could be your favorite river. Listed below are a series of points to consider when writing your letter:

1) Send your letter to:

**Mr. John Williams, Planning Engineer
Planning and Environmental Branch, NC-DOT
P. O. Box 25201
Raleigh, NC 27611**

RE: Ref. Number B3263, Bridge Construction on SR1200

- 2) Ask that the issue of Public Access to the Watauga River be addressed when designing the project.
- 3) Address the safety issues of a safe special parking area against that of dangerous shoulder parking.
- 4) Your use of the area for current paddling or future use when you achieve the level of expertise needed to paddle the Watauga Gorge.
- 5) Maybe you, your friends, or family use the Guys Ford Road bridge area for fishing, swimming, hiking, or other outdoor activities.
- 6) Would you offer your services in a structured program of trash control at the access sight?
- 7) The area is close to a major North Carolina University, Appalachian State, and provides access to a major natural resource for the students.
- 8) Even though you may not paddle the Gorge, or even plan to, an access area should be developed for those who do.
- 9) Any event, instance, etc. you were involved in or have knowledge of that would benefit from development of a formal public access area. (Maybe your car was towed due to lack of safe parking at the put-in).
- 10) Remember even though you may be a paddler, you are asking for a Formal Public Access, not strictly a paddlers' access.
- 11) If you are from out-of-state, point out the money you spend while in North Carolina paddling.
- 12) And last but not a major point, please send a copy of your letter to:
Cleo F. Smith (Phone: 919-755-1290)
416 Robin Hood Drive
Raleigh, North Carolina 27604
email: clesmith@hotmail.com

Now, let's go write that letter so that we can prove beyond doubt the need for a formal, Public Access to the Watauga.
Cleo Smith

Fifth Annual Cheat River Festival: Saturday, May 1, 1999, Albright W.V.

Support the Cheat and have a good time! There will be over 100 outdoor gear and arts and crafts vendors, a large variety of live music, a silent auction, a children's area, great food and river conservationists. Gates open at 1:00 pm and the festival winds down about midnight. Cost is just 5.00. On Friday April 30th, the Cheat Downriver Massacreence kicks off the weekend. This is a 12 mile, mass start, downriver race. To participate in the race you must register.

To get more information about the Cheat River Festival, contact the Friends of the Cheat as Follows:

Phone: (304) 379-3141

E-mail: FOC@cheat.org

or check out the website at: <http://www.Cheat.org>
The Festival goes on rain or shine. Pets are not permitted.

Elkhorn News

Hi folks,

Basically, Ed Council found out about a trails program grant, and sent notes to several BWA'ers that the Elkhorn Trust was going after this grant to try to purchase the land David Quarles has for sale at Knight's Bridge.

He wanted to give us a heads up that the Trust was going to try for this, not knowing how or if it would affect the current situation at Sauffleys, but also wanted to get the club on board if possible. He later went to the Viking's meeting and got a pledge for \$1000 toward the grant match.

He has also said he will match each club's donation from his own business. As Elkhorn Access committee chair, I investigated the grant conditions and the possible partners, and have come to the conclusion that it may be quite doable, and have a good chance of getting the grant. At this time Quarles has not yet agreed to sell to the Trust, and may not have even gotten an offer, though the offer will be made soon if it hasn't yet.

It will be discussed at the BWA steering committee meeting (place to be announced), although the club cannot vote to support the project prior to the grant deadline because our meeting is after the grant deadline. The officers will decide whether or not to recommend that the club support the project. The county appears favorable to the project, as do the division of water and fish and wildlife. The access committee supports the project, though would rather the location were better. I have decided as a private citizen (rather than a BWA representative) to support the project, and will be involved in helping write the grant, as I believe the public needs access to the creek even if it isn't where I want it. If Quarles won't sell, or the Trust doesn't get the grant, the partners interested in providing access could perhaps be mobilized in search of land further upstream and other grants. If the project is successful, it perhaps can be a model of a private/public partnership and an access point that doesn't cause trouble for neighbors, and hopefully open doors for other preferable spots for us.

I apologize for the lack of communication, but everything has happened in a fast and confusing way, and it was hard to figure out how to describe when I wasn't quite sure what was going on or if the project really had any potential to move forward. It is by no means a done deal yet, but does look feasible.

Zina

Zina Merkin
120 Victory Ave.
Lexington, KY 40502
April 2, 1999

Franklin County Fiscal Court

Dear Sirs and Madams,

As the chairperson of the Elkhorn Access Committee, which consists of representatives from the Viking Club of Louisville, the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, the Elkhorn Paddlers, and the University of Kentucky WildWaterCats, I wish to commend you for your consideration of the Knights Bridge Landing project.

Paddlesports is one of the fastest growing leisure activities in the country. Elkhorn Creek draws paddlers from Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana as well as from Western, Northern and Central Kentucky. We have an opportunity here for an innovative public-private partnership to begin to provide much needed public access to the wonderful resource of Elkhorn Creek. We envision this park as the beginning of a much needed system of access points, which will eventually provide opportunities for canoeing and kayaking trips of various lengths suitable for various abilities, as well as providing pleasant resting points for cross-country bicyclists, access for fishing, and places for family picnics. The Elkhorn Access Committee supports making Knights Bridge Landing a multi-use public access point, so not only Franklin County residents, but also visitors, may enjoy the natural beauty of Elkhorn Creek.

Sincerely,
Zina R. Merkin
Chair, Elkhorn Access Committee

Russel Fork River Study Update

Here is a short summary of new and interesting finds in the RF study. I will have a more thorough report this spring. Steve Powers, BWA Conservation Officer

Ichthyofaunal survey of the Russell Fork of the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River (VA & KY)

I have made 94 collections from 92 sites within the Russell Fork drainage. A total of five new records were made: Russell Fork drainage record in Virginia (Johnny darter), Russell Fork drainage record (Rosyside dace), two Levisa Fork drainage records (Silver lamprey, Stonecat), and a Big Sandy River system record (Mountain redbelly dace). I also confirmed the 1994 rediscovery of Blackside darters in Virginia. This species was considered extirpated in Freshwater Fishes of Virginia (Jenkins and Burkhead 1994). Failure to collect Eastern sand darters (USFWS C2 species) indicates that this species has been extirpated from the Russell Fork portion of the Big Sandy River. A total of six species that have or may soon have a conservation status were collected by the survey .

Ecuador-Primera Fortuna Gold Mining Project Threatens Jatanyacu/Napo Rivers and Communities in Amazon Basin

This article was passed on to us by BWA Paddler (sometimes lawyer) Brent Austin. Ecuador is near and dear to his heart and is perhaps his favorite place to paddle. He and Matt Terry are good friends and met when Matt was working at the Nantahala Outdoor Center. Matt is an exploratory paddler and has a number of first descents to his name in Ecuador. While many of us may never boat in Ecuador, in this age of multinational industries each of us must be aware of actions that ultimately affect us. Some of the riverpictures in Brents' article in the January/February issue of Bowlines were taken in the area when the mining is to happen. There is a great deal more information on the internet at: <http://www.moles.org>

by Matt Terry, Jatanyacu Conservation Coordinator.
Submitted for publication 9/10/98 in *Drillbits & Tailings* a biweekly online journal for mining, oil, and gas updates. Published by Project Underground <http://www.moles.org>

Hampton Court Resources, Inc. (HCR) of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, has recently released results from the exploration of mineral properties they have acquired in Ecuador, South America. The preliminary findings strongly suggest that these landholdings will have the potential to develop into a large volume, world class, commercial placer gold mine.

Founded on the Alberta stock exchange in 1993, HCR is still in its infancy as an oil and mining exploration firm. Slated as the Primera Fortuna Project, the company has targeted Ecuador as their "land of opportunity", since operating costs are much less compared to those in more developed countries, and large contiguous landholdings that are unheard of elsewhere have been made available. Primera Fortuna has become a major focus of growth for the company in the last two years.

In 1997, the Ecuadorian government granted HCR 100% interest in six major mineral concessions totaling 184 square kilometers (70.8 sq. mi.) near the city of Tena, in central Ecuador. The concession boundaries encompass a large portion of the floodplain area on both sides of the Jatanyacu and Ansu Rivers, which come together near the downstream end of the concessions to form the Napo River. The Napo River is a major and direct tributary of the Amazon River. A seventh concession totaling 22 square kilometers (8.5 sq. mi.) is currently under application.

Earlier this year, HCR announced in their annual report that preliminary test results for gold were positive. Most of the gold seems to be concentrated in or near bedrock layers in alluvial floodplain terraces along the Jatanyacu River. Open pit mines will eventually be employed to expose those gold bearing layers. HCR will move ahead throughout 1998 with larger scale test pitting and bulk sampling of prospective



areas with portable mining equipment. Pilot mining will commence with excavators and larger scale mining plants. In addition, a drilling program is slated to begin soon. Prudden Geoscience Services of Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, has been contracted to perform independent assessment of the concessions for gold potential.

Bob McPherson, the President of HCR, said in a phone that HCR does not intend to alter the riverine environment, and that only "clear water" will be discharged back into the Jatanyacu River. Furthermore, he rationalized that the impact of the mining will not be significant compared with the erosion that already occurs from seasonal rains and flooding. Allegedly, no chemicals will be used to extract the gold itself, and settling pools will be made to help contain the runoff. Unfortunately, simply exposing the sulphur-rich earth to the elements leads to the problem of acid mine drainage, even without the use of chemicals for extraction. Since HCR does not yet have an environmental track record to follow, time will only tell of how well they can contain their impact, and how concerned the company is about maintaining high environmental standards.

Environmentalists point to other mines in neighboring countries, and around tile world, where open pit mines have left terrible scars on the land, and polluted rivers and ground water sources with

acid mine drainage. In the United States, the Argo gold mine was one of the more productive gold mines in central Colorado. One-hundred-thirty-five tons of heavy metals pollution associated with acid mine drainage was deposited into a nearby waterway each year from this single point source. The US government declared it a Super fund hazardous waste site, after public drinking water sources became contaminated,



and aquatic life in the nearby river was nearly extinct. More than USD \$40,000,000 of US taxpayer money has been spent on the cleanup thus far. It is doubtful that HCR or the Ecuadorian government would have the money or the initiative to follow through on the proper cleanup of the mining wastes on the Jatanyacu.

Draining south and east between the towering snowcapped and glaciated volcano peaks of Cotopaxi and Antisana, the Jatanyacu River becomes one of the farthest reaching tributaries of the Amazon River in Ecuador. The Jatanyacu emerges from steep granite gorges spouting with waterfalls in nearly impenetrable jungle surroundings out into lower hills with high terraces and lush vegetation. It is here that the mining concession areas begin. There are villages in these lower valleys where indigenous populations live simply off of the land and river. Roads have not yet penetrated the south side of the river, which encompasses the concession areas. There is one footbridge, a cable crossing, and there are dugout canoes to access the south side of the river from the north side, which is accessible by a seasonal road nearly one hour's drive from Tena. This helps preserve the natural integrity of the south side of the river in a region of growing development.

Towards the downstream end of the concessions, the Ansu River joins the Jatanyacu River from the southwest side to form the Napo River. For now, the Ansu River also serves as a natural barrier to roads, limiting development in the southern portion of the concession areas. The first road bridge in the watershed crosses the Napo River about 1 km below where the Ansu River flows in. This is a starting point for boat-based jungle trips, which have historically brought most of the tourism revenues to the area.

Less than 15 km downstream from the Napo

bridge, the 2000-hectare Jatun Sacha Reserve is located along the Napo River. The reserve contains the only protected piedmont rain forest in Ecuador. It has been determined to be the most species rich in the world for trees, birds, and butterflies. This world-famous biological reserve and research station is already threatened by encroachment from oil interests. The nearby Napo River helps support this balanced ecosystem. Changes in water quality associated with acid mine drainage could trigger an adverse chain reaction up the food chain with damaging consequences.

The watershed is home to the endangered Giant River Otter, which has been observed in the concession areas. There is a brilliant species of yellow lady-slipper orchid, and yutzol trees are prolific along the banks of the rivers here, and are found nowhere outside of the geographic region. Clusters of ancient Quichua petroglyphs have been found along the rivers in the concession areas, adding cultural significance to these sites as well.

Ecotourism in what are now the concession areas has become increasingly popular over the last few years. Activities ranging from whitewater rafting and kayaking, to hiking and other jungle excursions, have put Tena on the map as a tourist destination, and boosted local economies. Most of the jungle tours employ the local villagers to provide food and services to the tourists, giving a sustainable economy to the area that is not a major threat to the environment. Boaters come from around the globe to enjoy the amazing scenery and world-class surf waves on the Jatanyacu River. They also contribute to local economics. "This is such an incredibly beautiful place. It doesn't seem right to risk losing all of it to an outside enterprise," commented one visitor to the area.

HCR presents itself as having a promising impact on the environment in public statements made from the home office in Canada. However, locally in Ecuador, company representatives have turned their backs when questioned about their work. So far the digging has only given rise to additional erosion in the areas, and their "preliminary assessments" have left visually obtrusive scars of bright-orange surveying marks on otherwise spectacular rocks and boulders in and along the Jatanyacu River, and on up the Illocullin River, which is an adjacent tributary used by the nearby indigenous village of Shandia to fish and batlic. A local aid worker expressed her concerns, "The local villagers are excited about the work opportunities that the mines will provide them, but what they don't understand are the long term consequences that go along with that industry. We need to educate the people here about the impacts of open pit gold mining and the threats that could be brought against their livelihood."

BWA Spring Clinic: April 24th and 25th

Classes for solo canoe, tandem canoe and Kayak

- Spend a weekend enjoying the outdoors on a wild and scenic river
- Meet Bluegrass Wildwater Association boater that know the rivers and are able to show you how to become an whitewater enthusiast
- Space& gear is limited so sign up now!
- Registration fee is 50.00 (60.00 after April 1) includes instruction, camping and 3 meals. Loan equipment from members is available on first come basis.

Contact: Ben Newman 606-278-5694
bnewman@lexmark.com
BWA Vice President

Clinic Director



or write to:

Clinic
BlueGrass Wildwater Assoc.
PO Box 4231
Lexington, Ky. 40504

New Meeting Location! Buckhorn Mountain Grill, 2305 Nicholasville Rd., Lexington



BlueGrass Wildwater Association
PO Box 4231
Lexington, Ky. 40504