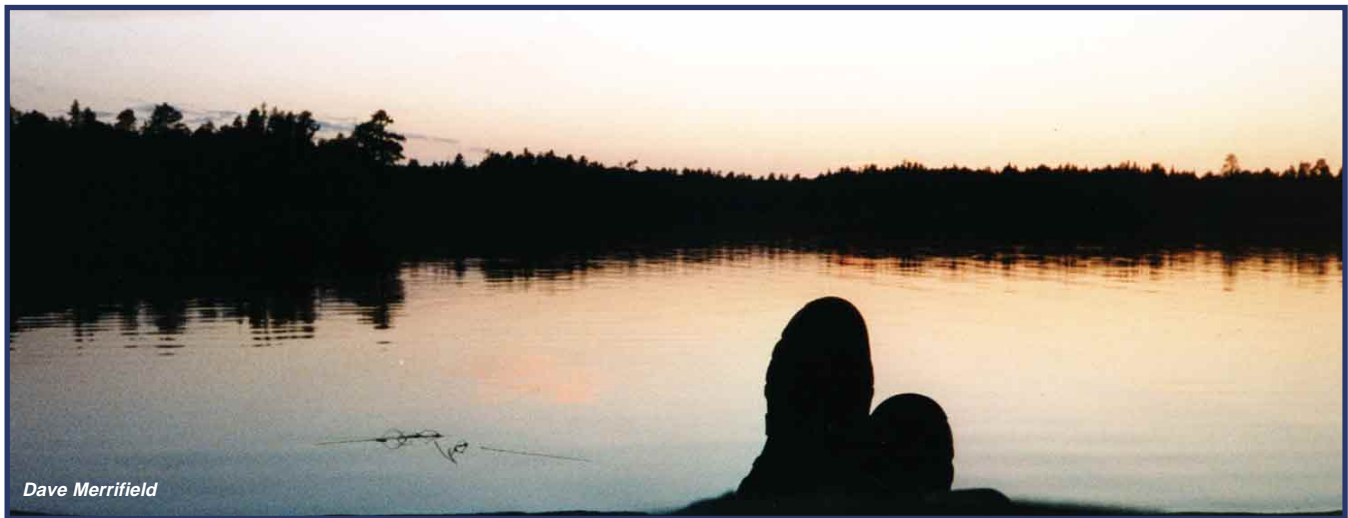


BOWLINES

Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association Sept/Oct 1999

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A Boundry Day.....



A Boundry Waters moment, good for kicking back and enjoying the evening.

The day starts out, like all others, with waking up. A cool, gray breeze blows in the no-see-um door of the tent. It isn't sunny yet, but it isn't raining either. This is a good sign.

We had set up camp in the pouring rain yesterday afternoon. Shivering, we strung the tarp, and Philip Cullen started cooking dinner to warm us up. Ben Askren and Teresa Bzdek stretched the rain fly and I scrambled underneath to assemble my tent. Once the tent was up, and each of us had poured a hot cup of Lipton's in us, we took turns stripping in the vestibule and climbing into warm, dry clothes in the tent. We ventured out in the downpour long enough to devour Therese Pierskalla's recipe for rice and potatoes with bacon. She couldn't make the trip, but she was in our stomachs if not in our boats. We set up Philip's tent then all 4 crawled back in my tent to shiver and play cards. Around 8:00, everyone was completely exhausted and still it poured, so we said good night and went to bed. Teresa and I seriously discussed the possibility of paddling out the next day and canceling the rest of our 10-day trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. It had rained 3 of the 4 days so far, and the mosquitoes were horrendous. We fell asleep without deciding.

Looking windward today, it seems like it might clear up, and after an hour, the sun rises, the clouds break and the breeze picks up. We string clotheslines everywhere to try to dry everything out. We make the usual oatmeal for breakfast. Trust me, it tastes way better in the sunshine than in the rain.

We break camp and pack up everything damp. True to form, the wind blows in our faces all day, but at least it's straight into our faces, so it doesn't screw up the steering. Today, I draw the bow position. I like the bow best because you can look around and not worry about steering. All you have to do is keep up a steady paddling rhythm. Philip is in the stern. He has improved a lot in the last 4 days of paddling. We still wander around the lake a lot, and we probably

Continued on page 3

Who owns the rivers in Kentucky?

From The National Rivers Website, Rivers of Kentucky: This is a great Website and a great organization. The info quoted here is but a small portion of great river info that can be found at: <http://www.nors.org/welcome.htm>

Answers to frequently-asked questions about river law in Kentucky, regarding river ownership, use, access, and conservation.
Review of the relationship of federal and state law regarding rivers:

The section on National River Law discusses river ownership, use, and conservation law throughout the United States. Following is a review of what individual states can and cannot lawfully do with the rivers within their borders.

1. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that rivers that are navigable, for title purposes, are owned by the states, "held in trust" for the public. This applies in all fifty states, under the "Equal Footing Doctrine."
2. Rivers that do meet the federal test are automatically navigable, and therefore owned by the state. No court or government agency has to designate them as such.
3. The federal test of navigability is not a technical test. There are no measurements of river width, depth, flow, or steepness involved. The test is simply whether the river is usable as a route by the public, even in small craft such as canoes, kayaks, and rafts. Such a river is legally navigable even if it contains big rapids, waterfalls, and other obstructions at which boaters get out, walk around, then re-enter the water.
4. The states own these rivers up to the "ordinary high water mark." This is the mark that people can actually see on the ground, where the high water has left debris, sand, and gravel during its ordinary annual cycle. (Not during unusual flooding.) It is not a theoretical line requiring engineering calculations. Where the river banks are fairly flat, this mark can be quite a distance from the edge of the water during medium water flows. There is often plenty of room for standing, fishing, camping, and other visits.
5. States cannot sell or give away these rivers and lands up to the ordinary high water mark. Under the "Public Trust Doctrine," they must hold them in perpetuity for public use.
6. The three public uses that the courts have traditionally mentioned are navigation, fishing, and commerce. But the courts have ruled that any and all non-destructive activities on these land are legally protected, including picnics, camping, walking, and other activities. The public can fish, from the river or from the shore below the "ordinary high water mark." (Note that the fish and wildlife are owned by the state in any case.) The public can walk, roll a baby carriage, and other activities, according to court decisions.
7. States do have authority and latitude in the way they manage rivers, but their management must protect the public uses mentioned above. They can (and must) prohibit or restrict activities that conflict with the Public Trust Doctrine. "Responsible recreation" must be allowed, but activities that could be harmful, such as building fires, leaving trash, and making noise, can legally be limited, or prohibited, in various areas. Motorized trips and commercial trips can legally be limited or prohibited by state governments.
8. State and local restrictions on use of navigable rivers have to be legitimately related to enhancing public trust value, not reducing it. Rivers cannot be closed or partially closed to appease adjacent landowners, or to appease people who want to dedicate the river to fishing only, or to make life easier for local law enforcement agencies.
9. State governments (through state courts and legislatures) cannot reduce public rights to navigate and visit navigable rivers within their borders, but they can expand those rights, and some states have done so. They can create a floatage easement, a public right to navigate even on rivers that might not qualify for state ownership for some reason, even if it is assumed that the bed and banks of the river are private land. Note that this floatage easement is a matter of state law that varies from state to state, but the question of whether a river is navigable, for title purposes, and therefore owned by the state, is a matter of federal law, and does not vary from state to state. Note that a state floatage easement is something that comes and goes with the water: When the water is there, people have a right to be there on it, and when it dries up, people have no right to be there. But rivers that are navigable for title purposes are public land up to the ordinary high water mark, so that even when the river runs dry, people still



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Club Officers 1999-2000

President	Bill Lynch	502-682-3967
Vice-President	Amy Shipman	606-278-4326
Treasurer	John Foy	606-278-2536
Secretary	Dave Merrifield	606-223-5943
Safety	Ben Askren	606-255-2768
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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, a stream gauge guide, and web site with a listserve for member's messages.

Meetings are held the at 7:30, the second Tuesday of each Month

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



have the right to walk along the bed of the river.

10. Only federal courts can modify the test of standards that make a river navigable for title purposes. States cannot create their own standards, either narrower or wider in scope. They can't make definitive rulings about which rivers are navigable for title purposes, only a federal court can.
11. The situation gets confusing when a state agency or commission holds hearings about navigability and public use of rivers. Landowners, sheriffs, and other people tend to think that such an agency or commission can create state standards that determine which rivers are public and which are private. But these are matters of federal law which state agencies cannot change.
12. State agencies should make provisional determinations that various rivers meet the federal test of navigability for title purposes. These provisional determinations should be based simply on the rivers' usability by canoes, kayaks, and rafts. They should then proceed to the question of how to manage navigation and other public uses of the river. In these days of government cut-backs, the agency should look for solutions that use existing enforcement agencies rather than setting up new ones. Littering, illegal fires, offensive behavior, trespassing on private land, and numerous other offenses are all covered by existing laws, and offenders can be cited by the local police, sheriff's office or state police.

The National Rivers Website and the Rivers of Kentucky section are made possible by the generosity of the members of the National Organization for Rivers (NORS.) To start or extend your membership, go to NORS Memberships: <https://secure.adventuresports.com/river/nors/secure/members.htm> Copyright © 1999 by the National Organization for Rivers. All rights reserved.

"A Boundry Day" Continued from pg.1

put in 2 miles for every mile the map says, but he is way better than when he started out. I resolve not to worry about a little zig-zagging. It isn't raining. There are no bugs in the middle of these lakes. That's enough for me.

First portage of the day. The map says it's 180 rods, about half a mile. As we near the trail leading off into the woods, we see a few people swatting, cursing, and paddling frantically away from the shore.

Experience tells us to put on our mosquito head nets and bug dope. I wonder if my blood has enough Deet in it to kill any of the buzzing little bastards that actually bite. Idle speculation. The cursing swatter-paddlers nod admiringly at our head nets and make straight for



the breezy section of the lake. Conversations between paddling groups are short in the BWCAW. Beaching the boats, Philip shoulders all 45 pounds of the 17-foot Kevlar canoe and trundles off. I, the notably weaker of us two, grab the light pack and all the loose boating gear and follow. I'll come back for the heavy pack. Canoe guy makes one portage; gear guy makes two; simple rules for simple guys. The first part of the portage would make a laughably easy technical rock climb, but then climbers rarely wear 17-foot Kevlar hats. It looks straight up. Philip's back, in front of me, is covered with enough mosquitoes trying to bite through his T shirt that I initially think he's wearing a black fleece jacket. Philip's most vigorous Irish curses fail to dislodge nary a one, but he keeps trying. After a couple hundred yards of rocky climbing, the trail levels into a slow moving stream of muddy water. There is theoretically a bottom to this, but I try to prance around and walk on the rocks and partly submerged logs to keep my socks dry. This is easier with a pack than with the composite burden Philip bears. He slogs straight on through in his sandals. The mosquitoes here swarm even thicker than before, and one sneaks inside my headnet, initiating a strange kind of dance where I toss everything and proceed to pound my head frantically with my open hands trying to squash the Satanic sucker.

At the end of the second trip, I deposit the last pack in the canoe and we paddle out to meet Ben and Teresa still scraping dead bugs off their blood-splattered shirts. Philip notes that the portage seemed more like 160 rods, and confides he's been counting his steps on each portage to

keep his mind off his aching shoulders, muddy socks, and welted back. Sanity is a precious thing out here in the wilderness, and we each have our own methods of keeping it with us. Philip counts his steps. I contemplate mass insect murder with huge cans of DDT.

About 4 hours later, we round the rocky point of an island with a big-red-dot campsite indicated on the map, and discover that the campsite is unoccupied, airy (read: too breezy for bugs), and has 2 good level spots for tents and a decent kitchen area away from the tents. We beach and unpack and set up tents to dry. Second order of business is stringing the clothesline to dry out our stuff, still soggy. The usual homemaker business aside, I stretch out on a rock and warm up under the afternoon sun. Teresa finds another rock and reads her book. Philip and Ben continue their contest of who can lose more fishing lures on the bottom of the lake. I think their investment in rods, reels, line, lures, and licenses netted them several hours of casting, perhaps one nibble, and lots of hubris. No one but me even notices that they didn't buy a fish stringer; it's a moot point and I keep it to myself.

Camping in the BWCAW is wilderness camping at its finest. The campsites are usually well-drained, have a firegrate which functions more as a level table than a cooking thing for us, have unlimited water, and have a cool thing called a wilderness latrine. Now, I'm known for frequent forays into bodily-function humor, so I'll warn you that I'm being serious. I love wilderness latrines. Think of a 5-gallon bucket inverted over a pit with a hole cut in the bottom, which is now the top. Place it in some idyllic sylvan locale with blue



sky overhead, sunshine on your shoulders, a cool breeze, and sometimes even a view worthy of a postcard. What more wonderful place to take care of an important part of your daily health-care routine? Sadly the bugs are thick around the latrines this year, spoiling some of the allure, but they still retain a slightly mystical quality for me. However, sometimes they're not well marked, so we pass part of this afternoon searching for it. It is a fine one.

The rest of the afternoon passes in counting all the cans of Coleman fuel left by thoughtless prior homesteaders here (the BWCAW ain't what it used to be), and paddling the 17 foot kevlar around the 2 tiny islands in sight of our home island. We wonder how the squirrels like living their entire

A Boundry Day” cont.

lives on a tiny island. Days later, we discover 2 squirrels swimming between islands, which answers that question. Paddling solo, you have to ferry cautiously across the breeze, ‘cause all that canoe just whips around in the wind. Nonetheless it’s a pleasant afternoon’s occupation. Whiling away pleasant hours is one of my favorite sports.

Dinner tonight is pizza by Teresa in Ben’s backpacker oven. Philip’s homemade beef jerky has appetized us and Teresa’s Boundary navels (think of “fuzzy navels” made with Tang. Hey, the astronauts drank it!) have mellowed away the stresses of the previous day and today’s exertions, too. The pizza turns out terrific despite a temporary inversion cause by a sudden attack of gravity assisted by Ben’s frequent inspection of the dinner-in-progress. Tensions among us



flare briefly, but are soothed quickly by the soaring and crashing blood sugar of a high carbohydrate meal. Dessert is a freeze-dried ice cream sandwich, cut into 4 pieces so we can share. It cost about \$2.50 in a Duluth outdoors store. It is delicious – it tastes exactly like an Oreo cookie. Mental note – bring Oreos next time and stop making stupid impulse buys in outdoors stores.

Sunset is one of the better ones of the trip. Purples and oranges splay across the western treeline. We take turns paddling solo and tandem to try for great snapshots, or just to enjoy the serenity. Paddle off behind an island where you can’t see or hear anyone and still your boat till the surrounding water returns to a polished mirror and watch. In about 30 seconds, you stop being an observer and become part of it all. This is why I come to the Boundary Waters. All the rain, bugs, sunburn, blisters, starchy camp food, aching shoulders, muddy portages and strained personal relationships are worth it for the hour before and after sunset. You can’t really describe it. It’s the same way that a postcard of something never quite captures the thing you bought the postcard of. It captures the sights, but it misses the sounds, the feelings, the “thereness” of the place. Did you ever see a painting of a sunset over a lake and wish you could paddle into that painting? At the BWCAW, you can. Turn around quickly, and you can almost see God dabbing in the details with his cosmic brush.

Dave Merrified

Russell Fork Downriver Race Results



The Invitation only race took place October 2,1999, the weekend of the 1999 Russell Fork Rendezvous. There was a good turnout and great weather for the race. The Race started above the Slot and ended at Climax

1. Chris Hipgrave	10:12 WH
2. Danny Inman	11:13
3. John Stokdill	11:17
4. B J Johnson	11:21
5. Clem Newbold	11:30
6. Bryan Kirk	11:37
7. Greg Hoskins	11:39
8. Brian Jennings	11:42
9. Chis Young	12:12
10. Corey Hall	12:15
11. John Grace	12:18
12. Daniel Talley	12:21
13. Nathan Helms	12:27
14. Duarte Morais	12:52
15. Ryan Bell	12:54
16. John Lord	12:57
16. Joey Baranski	12:57
17. Steven Matz	12:58
17. J B Seay	12:58
18. Eric Nies	13:03
19. Evan Collins	13:05
20. Brad Key	13:10
21. Matt Michael	14:14
22. Brent Austin	14:38
23. Steve Frazier	14:45 OC-1
24. Paul Fantetti	14:46 OC-1

An American in Barry's Bay

My annual pilgrimage to MKC – 1999 version *Dave Merrifield*

Canada opened her great white arms to 11 BWA paddlers the last week of July, 1999. Barry Sipple, Nancy Darland, and Brian Wright flew into Ottawa and drove down. John Foy and Willy Witt did the Black River Festival in New



The MKC Deck, where many a great meal is served!

York and drove up. James Monroe drove up with his family who spent the week canoe tripping in Algonquin Provincial Park. Clay Sousley (former and future, but not current BWA member and part-time cab driver) drove himself, and Amy Shipman, John Galik, Tom Hillman and yours truly caravanned up together to sunny Barry's Bay, Ontario to take classes or just paddle hearty at the Madawaska Kanu Centre. I think some of the others will take keyboard in hand and pen reflective missives of their own; this author will share his personal recollections for all with the tolerance for ennui to endure.

We began Friday night driving from Amy's house to Dick Shipman's house (Amy's dad) in Columbus. We played pool until the wee hours and crashed on his guest beds. Nicest bed and breakfast in the state, and Dick's girlfriend is mighty cute, if you ask me. Saturday, we bolted around Niagara, exchanged currency, and landed in Toronto. A few Canadian brews (5% alcohol) in a local pub, a dinner of Vietnamese food (Amy drank a whole bowl of sauce after mistaking it for soup), and some interesting stories (ask Tom Hillman about Prince Albert) later and we crashed in the hottest sweat-lodge hostel in town. Amy got up twice to beg the front desk for a fan. Outside of my dreams, I've never had Amy beg me for anything, but I imagine she can be rather convincing; since she didn't get a fan, there must really not have been any. Sunday, we drove to MKC, after stopping for beer in a town along the way. You've got to admire a country that has a store called, "The Beer Store" that is open on Sunday and has a line of 40 people waiting to get in when it opens. I think we went through Algonquin Park too early in the day to

see any moose, 'cause we didn't see any, although we did find Algonquin Outfitters which had good prices on Mountain Surf sprayskirts and other stuff, especially when you consider the exchange rate (US\$1 = CDN\$1.46).

Madawaska welcomed us with typical warmth. The staff was friendly and helpful, although a little disorganized. There were a couple confusions about sleeping arrangements, but I think we got them all straightened out. I'm not sure if I'll ever get the final bill figured out. It showed up on 5 separate VISA statements with 5 different conversion rates. Claudia (MKC director) was happy to get copies of recent Bowlines articles mentioning MKC, even though I wrote two of them. A smile from Claudia is worth it. I'm writing this article just to get another one.

Monday morning after breakfast, the SOAR (week of rivers) people including Amy, John Foy, Willy and James headed out to the Ottawa. We didn't see them for the rest of the week, so you'll need to ask them about their trip. The rest of us split into classes by boat type (canoe, kayak). As usual, I was the only C-1 and was lumped in with the canoe classes. The other canoeists included a father and son from England, a young guy from Calgary, 3 fifty-ish ladies from New Jersey who nattered constantly in the most amazing sort of self-support group, and a 50-something local guy. We split into 2 groups and my instructor, Harmen, took the more experienced group. Even though he had to deal with a huge range of skills, Harmen did a great job. Everybody improved a lot. He taught me some stuff about generating more stroke power, about bow and side surfing, about doing flat spins on waves, about doing C-1 racer stern squirts, and about



Student Barry Sipple on the Petawawa

using a cross-stern hanging draw to control ferry angle on waves. Everything he taught me improved my efficiency, or at least it will improve my efficiency when I master it after working on it for a while. We practiced on the Madawaska river in Chalet Rapid and in Palmer Rapids. By the end of the week, I was a lot better than when I started and I passed the Intermediate test with no problem. Harmen told me I was a borderline advanced student which struck me as the first time anyone had applied the word, "borderline," to me followed by a positive word.

After paddling every day, we'd go back to the Centre for a snack and juice to get the blood sugar back up (they do a

great job of managing your energy). Then I'd hit the sauna for a while and rinse off in the outdoor shower, which is an experience everyone should have. It feels absolutely fabulous to paddle hard all day, sweat your guts out, then peel off your clothes outdoors and take a hot shower. The wood screens kept it pretty private, but you still got the hedonistic delight of being naked and wet under the sunny sky. In the public interest, no photos of this are published.

At 6:00, everyone got together for some great dinner. The rest of the Kentucky crowd called me stuck-up cause they all ate together and I ate with lots of other people. It's not that I hate Kentuckians, I just wanted to meet the Canucks. Plus, most of the Canadians were good-looking, especially the women. They were also super-friendly. It was nice being all together with the different classes for meals. As Tom Hillman observed, at NOC you stay with your class the whole time, and at MKC you get to meet all sorts of people (at least if you're stuck up, you do).

The days were in the 80's and sunny with low humidity and the nights were typically in the high 60's. There weren't any bugs. The water was warm. I would have liked to play in Chalet and Staircase rapid more, but the feeder lakes were so low from a recent drought that the Bark Lake dam was only running on Tuesday and Thursday. Tuesday we worked on the gates and rapids courses, and Thursday we had our test on the same courses. The gates are interesting. In a rapid, if you blow a move, you just improvise and do something else. If you miss a gate, everyone knows it and you have to figure out why and how to get it the next time. 'Twas quite helpful for instruction. Monday was mostly a lake day to work on stroke technique, and on Wednesday we paddled at Palmer Rapids on another sec-



A 1999 Advanced Kayak Class at MKC. Gary (Canada) BWA Members Tom Hillman, Brian Wright, Barry Sipple and Sanne (the cool instructor).

tion of the Madawaska. The advanced kayak class went to the Petawawa on Wednesday morning and apparently had a great time. Wednesday afternoon, when most students "hit the wall" and lose energy, the whole school went to Bark Lake for a cookout and goof-off day. I didn't miss the paddling a bit. Brian and I tried rolling an OC-2 right after dinner. We were going to paddle off into a hidden cove and try it discreetly, but just as we paddled away from shore, Tom hollered, "Everyone's watching you!" and we decided to try it under pressure from 50 gazes. Nailed it,

first try. Foreshadowing of Brian's show-off success to come.

Thursday, after running the test course, everyone went down to Gravelpit on the Madawaska and watched the kayakers strive for "Ich bin der beste" glory. There's a big honor you can earn from MKC if you can hand-surf this



Brian Wright, doing the "Ich ben der Beste!"

hole while twirling your paddle overhead 3 times and hollering, "Ich bin der beste" which is German for, "I am the greatest." Several MKC people tried, but Brian Wright succeeded to the amazement and honor of all BWA members. That night, Brian received a commemorative T-shirt and was initiated into the "Ich bin der beste" club. Afterwards, most of us rode into the local burg of Wilno and had a few beers at the local pub. Brian stayed behind and perhaps achieved more glory. Ask him about it.

Friday, everyone went to the Ottawa river and ran either the Main or Middle channels. My group ran the Middle, and we had a blast. There's some interesting big-water maneuvering and some cool play spots. There's a monster rocky waterfall in the middle of the run called Garvin's. I asked my instructor what line he would recommend for me if I chose to run it. He said, "Run straight down the center, but toss your paddle away, cause you won't need it where you're going." I portaged with the rest of the class. Friday night ended with a steak dinner, although Brian, Barry, and Nancy didn't get any of it since they drove on to the city of Ottawa for the flight home.

Saturday, John Galik and Clay hooked up with Amy, Willy and John Foy to run the Gull. Tom Hillman and I drove back to Lexington. We passed through 7 separate thunderstorms on the way, one of which rolled bales of hay onto the highway and nearly rolled Tom's camper over. Sixteen hours later, I'm asleep in my own bed with some great memories and tired muscles.

If you haven't been to MKC, I know there's a group going back next summer. Think about it. Where else can you get a paddling vacation for 5+ days with lots of cool people, free shuttles, good food, insightful instruction, and a dose of Canadian culture for less than \$500?

BWA River Conservation News

Here it is folks. The results of about a year and a half of working on the fishes of the Russell Fork. Of course this is only the abstract. The actual thesis totaled about 125 pages. That would make for a pretty thick newsletter. While no species currently considered federally endangered was found during this study, I still think that it was a very worthwhile project that will at least provide an awareness of what fishes are found in the Russell Fork and the quality of the water. I have already condensed part of the thesis and will submit it for publication in the journal Southeastern Naturalist. Another portion of the thesis will also get some more work this fall and be submitted for publication this spring. Once published, all of the information from this project will be readily available to state agencies and biologists.



Don Spangler

At least 8 species found in the Russell Fork are considered a "complex" of species that needs to be studied further to determine exactly the ranges and status of each species within the complex. Each of these complexes has the potential to contain a Russell Fork endemic (meaning that species may not occur anywhere other than the Russell Fork, therefore warranting protection by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service) I am going to study one of these complexes for my dissertation. Several of the other complexes are also being looked at by other ichthyologists. The other ones will probably be studied in the near future. Again, I would like to thank everyone that assisted in this project. Field work is a lot of work and can not be done alone. Thanks also to the BWA as a group. The travel money you provided elevated the quality of this project and kept me from going too far into debt to complete this study. The BWA should be proud of it's commitment to river conservation and it's willingness to try new approaches to protecting rivers. Hopefully continued research will provide a legal reason to protect the river that we all love. See you on the water.

Sincerely,
Steve Powers

FISHES AND BIOGEOGRAPHY OF THE RUSSELL FORK

by Steve Powers

An ichthyofaunal survey of the Russell Fork of the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River in western Virginia and eastern Kentucky was conducted from May to November 1998. A total of 94 collections were made from 92 sites. A total of 65 species were collected. *Phoxinus oreas* (mountain redbelly dace) was a Big Sandy drainage record. *Ichthyomyzon unicuspis* (silver lamprey) and *Noturus flavus* (stonecat) were Levisa Fork drainage records. *Clinostomus funduloides* (rosyside dace), *Noturus stigmosus* (northern madtom), and *Stizostedion canadense* (sauger) were all Russell Fork drainage records. *Etheostoma nigrum* (Johnny darter) was a new record for the Virginia portion of the Russell Fork. Finally, *Lepomis auritus* (redbreast sunfish) was a new record for the Kentucky portion of the Russell Fork. Failure to collect *Ammocrypta pellucida* (eastern sand darter) and *Nocomis micropogon* (river chub) indicated their extirpation from the drainage. Reports by previous investigators of *Ichthyomyzon bdellium*, *Nocomis biguttatus*, *Notropis atherinoides*, *Pimephales promelas*, *Cariodes velifer*, *Ameirus nebulosus*, and *Ameiurus melas* were determined to be erroneous. Deletion of these misidentifications, combined with the new records of this study brought the total number of known fishes in the Russell Fork to 73 species.

Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) scores for sites on the Russell Fork proper ($n = 8$) and tributaries ($n = 4$) were calculated using Kentucky Division of Water (KDOW) metrics calibrated for the Western Allegheny Ecoregion. Mean IBI score for mainstem sites was 55.3. Mean IBI score for tributary sites was 33.5. Visual inspection and fish data indicated that the new metrics need to be calibrated for accurate use in the Russell Fork.

Fish data indicated that a series of cascades located near the Virginia / Kentucky border act as a barrier to upstream fish dispersal causing a depauperate fish fauna in the upper portion of the Russell Fork. *Cyprinella galactura* and *Etheostoma simoterum* were hypothesized to be Russell Fork natives transferred via headwater stream capture with the Clinch River. Species of *Etheostoma* found in the tributaries to the upper Russell Fork appeared to be mysteriously allopatric in distribution.

Steve Powers spent several months rooming at the fine accommodations at the Russell Fork Gorge take out while doing this study. I would like to thank him on behalf of the BWA for his dedication in completing the first comprehensive fish study of the Russell Fork Drainage. I hope his new accommodations in Alabama are as nice. Editor

Russell Fork River Rendezvous 1999

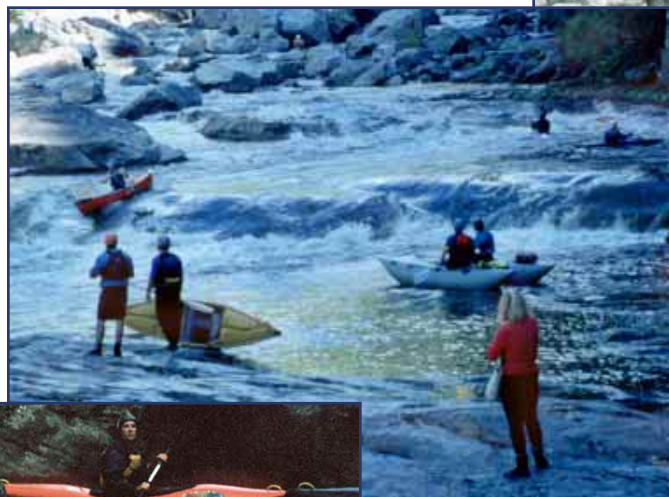
A Photo Essay of the Phestival Weekend by Don Spangler



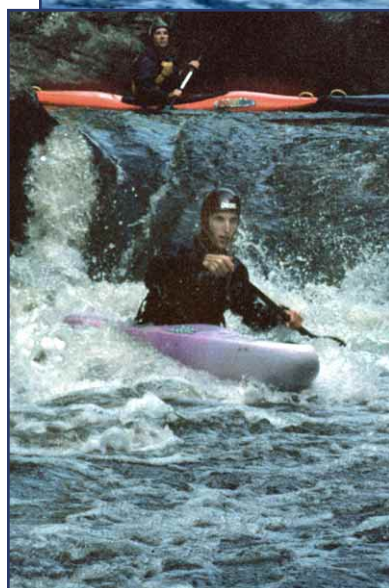
To "ride" the River,



To the deep
of the Gorge,
is to forge



a respect
and a
bond



with a master-
piece of nature.



**Music was heard
“almost” everywhere!**



**Tie-Dye was seen
“almost” everywhere**





**But the Beat,
Beat of the
Drums was
Everywhere!**





The Next Morning



Some needed Help!



Others were there to give it!



Island Creek has been cleared of strainers

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

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

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

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

ATTENTION: Please use extreme caution in running Island Creek this paddling season since the debris will move possibly creating hazards. Also there is debris above the put-in bridge that could move downstream over time and several large dead trees are poised to fall into the channel from on top of the gorge. This winter and spring please check in at the Wartburg National Park Service visitor center prior to running Island Creek to get the latest status. Also, after any run, please check back in with the Park Service visitor center to let them know what you observed so information can be passed on to other boaters.

Paddle Safely, Chuck Estes

New Meeting Location Soon!

For directions and information Call Club Officer or
go to: http://www.surfbwa.org/html/meet_eat.html



BlueGrass Wildwater Association

PO Box 4231

Lexington, Ky. 40504