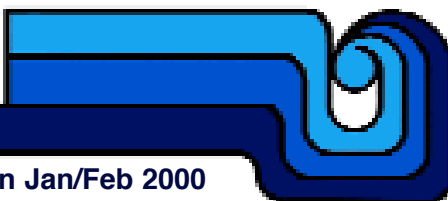


BOWLINES

Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association Jan/Feb 2000



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Cornish Hens & Cave Mud

Andrea Weider

"Wow, that's invigorating!" bellowed Mitch as he ran out of the Current River's 45 degree temperature. Mitch had chosen to refresh himself with a quick plunge on the third day of our Missouri adventure; the rest of us stayed grungy.

Three of the 10 paddlers have made this Thanksgiving trip an annual event for many years and the rest of the group come along on years when the family dynamics allow their absence at the dinner table.

Speaking of food, we lack for nothing. Thanksgiving dinner is celebrated on whatever day of the trip has the best weather for a lengthy cooking fire; this year it was actually the holiday itself. Lots and lots of wood is gathered and when the coals are deemed just right by Rich, Erik's foil-wrapped birds are placed into the fire for an hour's bake. The birds

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The BWA Spring Clinic: Confessions of a First-Time Paddler

Kathy Cole

It was around 7am on Saturday, the first morning of the Spring Clinic, and only a handful of people were out and about. Friday night's party had lingered into the wee hours of the morning, culminating around 2am when a male voice proudly and loudly proclaimed, "Wake up America, it's the BWA!" I had been looking forward to this day with anticipation, excitement, and ... dread. It would be my first experience paddling a kayak on moving water. Though the thought of being in the middle of a beautiful river surrounded by nature was appealing, still I'd heard the stories. You know, the ones where so-and-so got trashed in a rapid called "Meatgrinder", or how so-and-so had to be rescued from something called "Pure Screaming Hell". Pure Screaming Hell. It didn't sound too promising. Yet, here I was, getting ready to voluntarily go out in a little tiny boat and run some rapids. I had been assured there wasn't anything "dangerous" on this stretch of the

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NPFF 2000 Sneak Preview!



The variety and quality of films submitted for the 17th annual National Paddling Film Festival ensures that this year's festival will knock your socks off. We have exotic adventures in uncharted jungles, and world record breaking big drop first descents. There's history, and history in the making. There is humor, beauty, adrenaline, serenity, dignity and absurdity. At the time of this writing we still aren't sure exactly what the film line up will be, but we have 9 hours of films to fill up approximately 6 and a half hours of time, so.....

Now that I've teased you a little about the films, let's talk about some of the other aspects of the NPFF. Elsewhere in this issue you will find an article by Zog Aitken about the Silent Auction and the line-up of Sponsors and gear. But we are having some other exciting things going on this year that are new and different. Our seminar speaker had to cancel because he was stuck paddling down in Chile (poor guy!!), but we may have more video than we expected so that time may be needed for it.

One of Sam's brainstorms is to run a live feed of the film festival onto a web site, so those who can't make it to the festival can get a peek at some of the films and some of the fun! Of course a sampled image, shown at about 2 inches square, can't possibly deliver the excitement and detail of that big drop carnage or the exquisite beauty of wilderness settings, so if you CAN attend the festival, you really need to see these films in their full glory.

We are also going to put the still images up on the NPFF web site about a week before the actual festival, and allow folks from all over the world to vote on the Best Image. This will be a new category of award, and the traditional Best Paddling Image award will still be determined by vote of those in attendance at the NPFF. And the Best Digital Image award, which carries the prize of a Lexmark Color Printer, will also be determined only by the on-site votes (so don't bother stuffing the e-ballot box).

The motion entries we have received include Twitch 2000 by Eric Link, as well as Gush by Ben Aylesworth of Who's Your Daddy fame. Milt Aitken is contributing Deliver Me From the Paddlesnake, covering the entire Chattooga watershed. John Davis sent us a slightly shortened version of All in the Surf while Paul Bonesteel is contributing a 10 minute sampler of his APaddler's Personal Trainer workout film. Ken Whiting's Play Daze was our first entry while the last one to squeeze in under the deadline was A Kayak Adventure in Borneo, which also weighs in as the longest, 52 minutes. The shortest is a series of 3 public service announcements about river safety by the National Park Service in the Blackstone River National Heritage Corridor in Rhode Island. Just slightly longer is an amateur entry of first descents in New Zealand and Chile in a WhamBam ThankyouMam 3-3/4 minutes! There is a documentary on the North Fork of the Feather River and how great the paddling would be if the Hydroelectric plants would share the water, and a film on the historic race last November at the Youghigheny River's Ohiopyle Falls. And of course Appalshop's Breaks of the Mountain about the Russell Fork

BOWLINES

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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 listserv 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



and some of the issues surrounding its use and abuse. There are a few more films I haven't mentioned, but it's good to keep a few surprises. Some of these films will be available to purchase at the festival, and we hope the filmmakers will agree to enter them in our Road Show as well.

I hope that you all are saving the last weekend in February for the NPFF and will show up and be part of the fun. We still have need of some volunteers as well, to help at the Front Desk, selling concessions, or with clean-up. Just a small note about clean-up. Last year we were unaware that there is no building janitorial service scheduled on weekends. This meant that classes Monday morning had quite a mess to contend with, since the next clean-up was not till Monday night. They almost didn't let us use the place this year, but we promised we'd leave it in better shape. So as the home-town hosts, please help us keep the place reasonably clean (and help with the clean-up at the end of the day), so they'll let us use the building again next year. Thanks, and I look forward to seeing you there on February 25th and 26th!!

Zina Merkin, NPFF Co-Ordinator



are Cornish hens that have been partially prepared at home and when done, the meat falls off our forks. Also into the fire goes my zucchini-cheese casserole, Julie's sweet potato casserole, and a tin of Linda's stuffing. Mitch prepared a scrumptious salad as our first course, preceded by my guacamole appetizers. On the buffet table (an overturned canoe) Todd's smashed potatoes and Jane's brussels sprouts with mustard sauce joined my wholeberry cranberries, Sandy's rolls, Rich's pumpkin pies and Frank's whipped cream. Bottles of wine accompanied this fine repast. By 9 PM we had managed to waddle to our tents and sleeping bags.

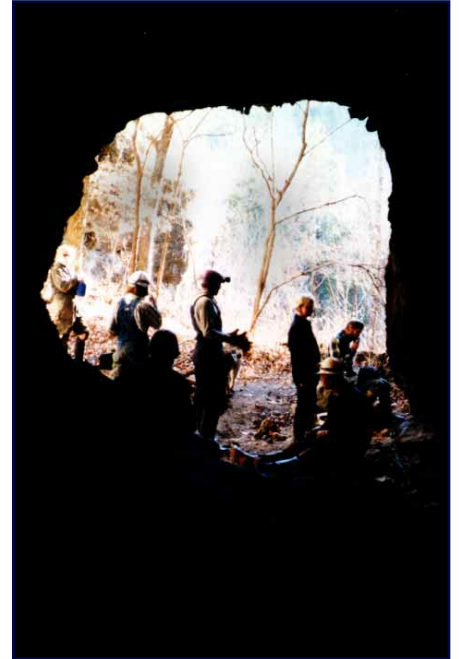
The Current River, and its tributary the Jacks Fork River, are part of the National Scenic Rivers system and are administered by the National Park Service. Flowing south and east through south central Missouri, the Current covers a mostly gravel bottom and water levels can rise rapidly. Paddlers need to be aware of escape routes when choosing a gravel bar as their night's home. At this time of year, for us this normally hasn't been a problem; it's too cold to rain. This trip was no exception—those nights were cold! Folding a tent in the morning involves crunching the encrusted ice first. But the days were pleasant in the 50's with no rain and Saturday was balmy at 65 when Mitch had his "swim". These are not whitewater rivers but the quick current combined with lots of riffle areas and the occasional root-wad keep things interesting. Add



some high cliffs, eagles, turkeys, deer, coyotes, the area's protected herd of wild horses, and the many accessible caves and you have the ingredients for a fine trip.

Oh yes, the caves, our *raison d'être*. It is essential to purchase the river map marking the river miles, the hollows, the entering streams, campgrounds, springs and most caves.

Equipped with coveralls, boots, helmets, headlamps, gloves and 3 backup sources of light, we walk, climb, crawl and slither through as many as we can manage in our time-frame. A few are visible along the



river but others require a hike up the hollow and a search along the hillsides. Exploration is a delight as we find various formations such as stalagmites, stalactites, flowstone sheets, soda straws, rimstone dams, small waterfalls, huge rooms, and tiny passageways. We are very careful not to disturb the hibernating bats, since they deplete energy reserves if awakened by the warmth of our headlamps, and can perish. What a sight we are, as we emerge covered with the tenacious reddish brown cave mud. It is like none other.

All too soon, our takeout appears before noon on Sunday. Frank and I were thrilled we had the opportunity to do this trip again.



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Emory/Obed, but if that were really true, why did the clinic leader need to know my next-of-kin?

The first order of business was breakfast. One thing can be said about the BWA across the board: no matter what our differences, good food will always bring us together. After breakfast we received our class assignments. We were given the "let's have fun but let's be safe" speech, got our boats and gear together, and headed to the put-in. I got in my boat and shoved off—so far, so good. Soon everyone in my group was in the water ready for basic instruction.

"First we'll learn the forward stroke," our instructor, Lyn Lewis, informed us.

The "forward stroke"—sounds easy, doesn't it? Hah! Lyn looked on in horror as each person in my group proceeded to zigzag haphazardly from point "A" to point "B", trying desperately to actually keep the boat going forward instead of sideways or even backwards. I'm sure our efforts made us look like we were trying to avoid gunfire. And not only that, but it seemed like there were giant magnets in the hulls of our boats, pulling us together, causing us to constantly run into each other. At one point we gave up, hooked our arms together, and let the outside people paddle. It seemed to work much

better that way.

"Let's try something different for a while," Lyn sighed.

I think she could sense that we weren't going to get any better right away, and wanted to take our minds off the fact that we were fairly unsuccessful at the most basic skill. So our next order of business was learning how to do an eddy turn, a peel-out, and a ferry. To accomplish this we had to paddle upstream in water that had to be moving about 100 miles an hour. After running into each other no less than five times per person, we finally made it to a place along the shore where we would learn our new skills.

I think that at this point we all started to get a feel for paddling. We ferried across, then ferried back; we peeled out; we eddy turned; we were moving and shaking and looking good. Then we had to paddle back to the campsite for lunch, and reality set in. It was the same old thing: "Oops, excuse me, didn't mean to run into you," secretly thinking, "Why can't you stay out of my way!"

Now I want to give new paddlers a good piece of advice: for lunch, ALWAYS bring something good to eat to give to your instructor. They will remember you



Wanted: Paddlers/Authors

TrailWorks.com, a great new website dedicated to outdoor recreation, is seeking submissions for our "River of the Week" feature. A 500 - 700 word description of your favorite run, with five to ten pictures of the river, would be perfect. (We'll take care of the proofreading and editing.) TrailWorks will pay \$50.00 for each article that we publish on our website. Visit our site at www.trailworks.com and click on "River Of The Week" for a sample.

We would also like to post your favorite river pictures. You can send us prints, slides, negatives, or electronic copies. We'll return the originals, provide you an electronic copy, and credit the photographer.

For more information please e-mail Rsaylor@trailworks.com, or call 888-771-0002, extension 289, and ask for Robin Saylor.

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fondly and won't mind so much when they have to save your rear-end later that afternoon. Because after lunch, the next order of business was running the river.

We piled our boats on one truck, then piled ourselves into another vehicle to be shuttled to the confluence of the Emory/Obed Rivers. This was it. Now I was going to see what all the fuss was about. Nothing up to this point had given me a burning desire to continue learning to paddle. In fact, the only things that were burning were the muscles in my shoulders and arms. "Forward stroke", indeed! I had another name for it...

We carried (dragged) our boats down to the confluence and put in for our first river run. We all went through the first rapid with no problems, and the smiles on our faces seemed to say, "Hey, we can do this. We can't forward stroke, but we can run a river!" Then we came to the next rapid.

"We'll have to scout this one," said Lyn.

Oh, yes, we scouted that next rapid, that gaping hole with the 5' wave on the other side (or so it seemed). We were mortified.

"What line do you think you should take?" asked Lyn.

"How about back to the shuttle?"

"No, seriously."

"Seriously."

As it turned out, the rapid was a lot of fun, and nobody in my group swam. There were even cries of "wheeeee" (which I later learned you were NEVER supposed to say). We were paddling! We were moving and shaking and looking good! Then we came to the next rapid.

There were several other BWAers hanging out at the next rapid, including Dale Perry, who had been a student in a lifeguarding class I had taught. On hindsight, I think they were there to pick up the carnage whenever a new student flipped and swam. Our instructions were to paddle through this rapid, then keep going through the next small rapid. My turn came and "wheeeee" — I made it through the first rapid! I was so excited I forgot the instructions, tried to catch an eddy, and remembered at the last second I was supposed to keep going.

Now, here's another piece of advice for new paddlers: never change your mind at the last second when catching an eddy. Either catch it, or keep going. All of a sudden I found myself upside down, not even realizing how I got that way. My first thought was "Dale's right beside me. All I have to do is bang on my boat and he'll give me a bow rescue." After banging for about 20 seconds, my next thought was "Hey, I'd better get the h--- out of here!" I managed to hold onto my paddle and popped

up beside my boat. I heard people yelling "Feet first! Feet first!" which is the way you're supposed to "swim" down the river if you're out of your boat. I held onto my paddle and boat, then saw I was heading towards a couple of rocks that were about 6' apart. No problem, except that my boat was 9'2" long and was about to hit the rocks broadside.

Did I think about the consequences of being pushed into a strainer composed of those two rocks and my boat? Did I think of my personal safety? No! All I could think about was having to reimburse Canoe Kentucky for a crunched boat. Nothing motivates like the fear of monetary loss. I managed to turn an end of the boat so it passed between the rocks with no problems. Then the boaters on the other side of the rapid helped tow me and my boat to shore. I later asked Dale why he didn't give me a bow rescue, since I had flipped right beside him. He said I was too far away. Right. He later confessed how he had laughed hysterically while watching me bang on the bottom of my boat. I think it was payback for all the trouble I gave him when he practiced rescues in my lifeguarding class.

The rest of our run down the river was fairly uneventful and actually pretty relaxing. There's nothing like being on a river without the distraction that motorized crafts can cause. We made it back to camp where dinner, friends, and river stories awaited. I had just paddled my first river.

With muscles stiff and sore, it was hard getting back in the boat on Sunday, but once we got going, the day was even better than Saturday. We spent more time playing in the rapids, and even our "forward stroke" seemed better than the day before. I had a clean run from the confluence to the campground. It was a great way to end the clinic.

It's been a year since I first set foot in a kayak. I haven't had the opportunity to run too many rivers, but I've had a few adventures since the clinic. A friend of mine once told me that everyone is into paddling for different reasons, and that I should find out my reason and revel in it. I admire the skill and guts of the people who run the class V rapids, but that will never be for me. I am not into paddling for the adrenaline rush. Class II and III rapids are good enough for me, and I'm just as happy paddling flat water where I can watch the kingfishers, hear the woodpeckers, see the curious looks of wild animals on the bank, and become one with life that's unspoiled by concrete, machines, and busy-ness. I hope you find your reason for paddling and revel in it, too.

SYOTR.

The whitewater reach is the Elkhorn "Gorge" of Kentucky. Five miles of class II-III rain dependent stream whose flow has been called home, sanctuary, playground, and business has recently gained a new status - whitewater access protected. This is the story about the creek, the land, a family, a feud, some bottles of bourbon and how a group of people who love whitewater secured a place for all paddlers.

The run has historically been from the "Forks of the Elkhorn" bridge put in on US 460 where the North Elkhorn and South Elkhorn tributaries come together down to the traditional takeout through "Saufley's gate" on Peaks Mill Rd. Birthplace to generations of wwpaddlers, the Elkhorn's large watershed has the ability to hold a good rain and generally keep it's flow. Occasionally prone to massive floods, which are constantly changing and rearranging it's limestone creek bed, there was one particularly awesome deluge, that actually smoothed out the Elkhorn's whitewater into class I - II for a brief time. But don't pass the "Mighty" Elkhorn off as lame or too tame. Even during it's brief post flood wwanemia the creek could still kill. Although one flood, totally blew out a brand new and costly concrete bridge the influential Saufley family had constructed at the takeout, the same high water left the innocent looking low dam at the Jim Beam Bourbon distillery still standing and remaining as a multiple killer. At most flow levels (use the visual gage on the Forks US 460 bridge) this easily run barrier is a class II move with class VI drowning potential that continues to claim the occasional careless tuber or too casual or inexperienced boater who becomes caught in it's drowning machine grip.

Through the late 80s and early 90s the Elkhorn had more periods of high water that gradually brought back the class III hydraulics and the ww paddlers to carve it's currents. Then in 1997, a huge flood shoved out a few solid class III drops just in time for the wwpaddling boom that was sweeping across the country. Suddenly, the 99 mile long Elkhorn "Creek" (one mile short of making the river classification) seemed covered in boaters and gleaming SUVs. Not only were private wwpaddlers enjoying the higher levels but also lots of people very new to the sport. Folks who tended to rent their boats from outfitters and sometimes sit on their life jackets instead of wearing them.

The owners of the takeout, Yvonne and Zack Saufley, had always graciously allowed private wwpaddlers of the Elkhorn Gorge to exit the creek across their land and park their cars along the wide place in the road next to their gate. In the days before wwpaddling became so popular it was rare to see more

than 3 or 4 boaters cars parked here on any of the rainy days the creek was high enough to paddle. However, this same wide spot in the road was also a frequent hangout for locals bent on partying, fishermen, high school lovers and unwelcome overnight guests. These non-paddling folks were much more frequent, and polluting prone visitors.

They tended to drop beer cans, spent condoms, empty worm containers, tires and washing machines. According to legend, this prompted a member of the Saufley family to take a front-loader and actually push one persistent local's car into the creek. Eventually the state was petitioned to install guard rails along the roadway. This action, along with the Saufley's own fences and gates mostly

kept the non-boating people out. Yet there was still just enough room left for the occasional paddler or fisherman to get their car legally out of the road with no hassles from the Saufley family.

WWboaters generally were welcome by creek side landowners back in the 1970's and 80's. The Saufley's had even invited the Bluegrass Wildwater Association out of Lexington to hold monthly meetings on their land on at least two occasions and also helped the group conduct a Boy Scout trip by allowing everyone, including one of the local outfitters, CanoeKY to park and organize on their land. The BWA and other KY paddling groups, including the Viking Canoe Club of Louisville, and Elkhorn Paddlers, always endeavored to keep good relations with the Saufley family as well as all of the landowners along the creek. Performing annual creek cleanups, being considerate, respectful to privacy and property and generally attempting to kiss Mrs Saufley's butt with bottles of Jim Beam at Christmas. These were harmonious, symbiotic times for private wwpaddlers, landowners and bourbon makers.

When the popularity of paddling began soaring in the early 90's and the car company ads were sprouting kayaks, two commercial outfitters began having some success running self guided canoe and kayak trips along the various sections of the very scenic Elkhorn. Soon, all the local landowners were upset at the increased numbers of people floating or paddling the Elkhorn and it's forks. Feeling invaded, the locals were constantly reminded that the world had found them as they watched large commercial vans pulling trailers full of boats and disgorging lots of loud, nervous tourists all over their serene countryside. The parking, loading and unloading of half dressed



AW Acres: The Elkhorn Saga

humans of all ages along the narrow, winding road was whipping the locals into a property rights frenzy. There were also more frequent disturbances from the unskilled paddlers of the Elkhorn Gorge. Competent wwboaters on the stream at higher levels were witness to numerous ugly swims and sometimes were called upon to assist in the rescue of totally unprepared boaters who, after their swim, ended up trespassing across private property and disturbing irritated locals to use the phone or beg a ride. It was becoming a stream with it's people out of balance and everyone demanding their own piece of the Elkhorn.

Kentucky is a state that has seen it's fair share of Hatfield vs McCoy style feuds. Right here in the rolling hills of Franklin, Co., home of the Elkhorn Gorge a new fight between neighbors, the Outfitters vs the Landowners was forming fast. For awhile the private wwboaters managed to stay neutral and were able to gingerly paddle between the threatening legal boulders and nasty verbal hydraulics raging between these two interests. Around 1998, the Rain Gods bestowed their bounty and produced the second year in a row of unusually wet weather conditions. The rain fed, flood enhanced, Elkhorn Creek seemed to be running continuously and on the ever sexy Elkhorn, if it rained, they would come.

The Elkhorn was now more easily paddled and convenient than any time in recent

boater memory. Always a relatively safe and forgiving beginner stream (if you portage the bourbon plant dam on the left) the Elkhorn Gorge is also full of fun surfing spots for experienced playboaters. Just a few minutes from Lexington and Louisville, an easy day trip from Cincinnati and weekend from Indianapolis. Private wwpaddlers were becoming much more prevalent. Outfitted in the new smaller boat designs, which were helping to bring out the nuances of the Elkhorn's flow at various levels, boaters were creating new fun moves. Unfortunately we were into another type of style which created some problems. The cancer growing in wwboater relations began with the overcrowding of the few parking spaces available along the Saufley's sliver of land at the takeout.

Instead of 5 shuttle vehicles, it grew to 10 and even 20 or more on those sunny summer Saturdays when the creek was flowing strong. Private paddlers were also generating plenty of noise, exposed skin and middle of the road conversations along the narrow and moderately used country lane. The vastly increased volume of private boaters was helping to tip the people situation further out of balance on the Elkhorn. The landowners were losing patience and it soon became apparent that no amount of Jim Beam would help maintain access to the creek.

Mrs Saufley was spotted taking pictures of the parked shuttle cars along the road. Boaters were getting nervous that the Saufley's take out may soon be taken away and nobody wanted to see their brand new Lincoln Megamachine pushed into the creek with a frontloader or towed. It wasn't a long wait when one day the dreaded "no parking signs" sprang up and were stuck into the prime parking spots along the right of way at the Saufley's gate by the KY dept. of transportation. The very next weekend those signs were promptly pulled out in broad daylight, virtually under the noses of the Saufley's, by a

couple of shortsighted boaters and thrown into the creek. Suddenly, thanks to these few, all wwboaters lost what little immunity might have remained against the landowner and outfitter feud raging around them.

By the time 1999 rolled around, the troubles on the Elkhorn were getting beyond ugly. An anonymous complaint from a landowner gave rise to a lawsuit by the county against the owner of CanoeKY, one of the outfitters on the creek, for having a commercial operation on property zoned rural/residential. Ed Council, the owner of CanoeKY owns a house along the the creek at Knight's Bridge (aka; Quarles Bridge) about 1.5 river miles downstream of the Saufley's gate and the next available place to takeoff the creek. State Troopers were reported to be cruising around when it looked like rain to check the reinstalled no parking signs and added barbed wire.

Members of the BWA and other local paddling groups realized that the Elkhorn was becoming much more difficult to paddle. In hopes of avoiding the tow truck at Saufley's, private boaters were being pushed downstream to Knight's Bridge. Unfortunately the parking problems around the bridge were really no better and there was little doubt that numerous "no parking" signs or guard rails would sprout soon around there as well.

By the spring and early summer of 1999 there was an optimistic and promising new initiative started to gain federal matching funds towards the purchase of the Quarles land, 50 yards downstream of Knight's Bridge and perfect for paddler access. The federal matching grant could provide funds for improvement into a public creek access point. It seemed a good solution to everyone's dilemma. David Quarles (the only landowner willing to sell land for this purpose) could sell his land, wwpaddlers gained a takeout, outfitters would have a legal boat launch and pickup point, and landowners would see, hear and encounter less congestion and disturbance around the road and near their residences. The grant writing effort was spearheaded in a collaboration between several members of the BWA and the Elkhorn Trust, a conservation organization represented by Ed Council, owner of CanoeKY.

Expertly written by a dedicated BWA member, the Knight's Bridge Landing proposal for funding was unanimously approved by the Kentucky State Trails Advisory Board with the Department for Local Government staff ranking the proposal 5th out of 58. It was starting to look good for the paddlers of the Elkhorn. There was only one remaining hurdle to overcome before the dollars flowed, Commissioner Bob Arnold of the Department for Local Government, who made the final recommendations and submittal of funding requests to the Federal Government Federal Highway Administration. If the proposal got the go ahead from Mr Arnold federal approval was virtually assured.

A letter writing campaign was initiated by paddlers from three states to help Mr Arnold understand the necessity of Elkhorn Creek access. At one county tourism commission meeting where the project was discussed Mrs Saufley stood up and declared that it would be a "cold day in hell" before

Saga... continued from pg.7

she allowed any boaters the use of her land ever again. Another landowner appeared in local TV news interviews claiming increased congestion and trash if the takeout was funded. Two weeks later Mr Arnold, an unelected political appointee of Kentucky's Governor had reached his decision. He denied the Knight's Bridge Landing proposal, using as an excuse, the fierce opposition from the few well connected local landowners. In a triumph of no-brainer political expediency, the good ol' boy (and girl) network had successfully portrayed the proposal as the work of outside special interests bent on destroying the serenity and sovereignty of the area by encouraging hordes of tourists and trespassers to descend upon the Elkhorn.

This created a crisis for wwpaddlers. Not only had private wwboaters lost the bid to create a new access point - we were now fully embedded into the feud between the landowners and the outfitters. The Quarles land was still for sale (as it had been for almost 2 years) and several dedicated members of the BWA continued to work to find a solution. Hopes (and the weather) were in a severe drought however with no one anticipating a simple or quick opportunity to gain access. Boaters were dreading the inevitable confrontations with landowners that surely would come with the winter and spring rains.

Then in mid October of 1999, David Quarles decided to put up his land for sale in an absolute auction to take place in 30 days. For private ww paddlers, this moved the situation from a simmering crisis to an outright and immediate emergency. There were no other landowners between the Saufley's and Knight's Bridge known to be willing to sell their land - especially if it was to be used for creek access. If the Quarles land were to be purchased by a nonpaddler or possibly by an adjacent landowner hostile to recreational access, Elkhorn wwpaddlers could become an endangered species reduced to outlaw renegades down a creek with no takeout.

Faced with dwindling time there were still huge divisions within the BWA ranks over the best plan to follow in the event of a successful bid at the auction. We needed a single unifying plan and we had two. It was a very bad case of shuttle madness over how we would drive this bus to the takeout. One group, fearful of the restrictive zoning and injunctions over use as access was advocating the land be purchased and donated to the Fish and Wildlife Service which was perceived to have increased leverage in getting zoning changes. Another faction was pushing for a completely private buy with the land held by a small group of investors as a limited liability corporation. Finally, a handful of BWA paddlers strongly involved on both sides of the debate met over a few beers at an Irish pub the Monday evening before the sale that Saturday. It was during this meeting where the consensus was finally brewed to purchase the land with private donations and immediately donate it to American Whitewater. The entire land donation was to be controlled throughout the sale by the "principle donors", people who gave \$500 or more towards the purchase. Each \$500 donation equaled one vote on the new AW Acres Council. The AW plan was announced at the BWA meeting on the following night with only three days left till the sale. The membership immediately voted to donate \$1000 to the cause. Within those three days the access movement had miraculously obtained donated pledges in excess of \$32,000 thanks to the generosity,

determination and online connectivity of wwpaddlers, their organizations in three states and the able help of the staff and other volunteers of American Whitewater. Actually the full total collected in the emergency blitz was slightly over \$40k including "loan pledges" to be used in case of a close bidding competition.

We felt sure that we had enough money. Who else would really want 4.89 acres of perpetually flooding creek bottom? The only other interests that were perceived be out there were local deep pocket landowners bent on buying the land only to keep it out of wwboater's hands. We paddlers were completely paranoid and receiving reports that there would be hostile, local landowners or their representatives bidding at the sale. A plan was needed to give the impression that the boaters had run out of money in order to stop someone from simply bidding up the price. We could not allow ourselves to get into a toe to toe bidding war with a landowner who potentially had much deeper pockets and an equal fervor to "save" the Elkhorn.

Saturday morning, the day of the sale arrived and the final stealth meeting of the key players was held in Lexington. Mr Party (aka Rich Smithers) was there in his green Jim Barna Log homes hat and JB Log Home logo satin green warmup jacket. John Foy, treasurer of the BWA pressed into service for the sale, came armed with the last minute donor money totals loaded into his laptop. I was there to represent American Whitewater and Burgess Carey for the BWA. In between gooey McDonald's pancakes we went over the plan and made sure everyone understood the bidding queues and our roles. Then we lit out for Frankfort and the sale at 10am on the property at Knight's Bridge.

For the numerous volunteers heavily involved in the process it had been a fast moving three days. Frantically soliciting money from donors via emails, message board postings and phone calls, there was no time for traditional snail mail communication. Along with the conferences with lawyers, auctioneers, surveyors, paddling groups, landowners, and web page builders, the money was pouring in with credit card donations through the AW web site and by hand delivered and mail promised checks. David Quarles, a local calm water paddler and owner of the property up for auction even added a dramatic karmic twist by joining the BWA and donating one of the largest contributions to the cause. He wanted to see his land go to American Whitewater as much as the wwboating public did.

Mr Party drove himself to the sale at the Elkhorn and made sure to stay separated from John, Burgess and I who were acting as if we didn't know him. Pulling onto the land with a boat on the racks of Burgess's Sportsmonster 4X4 van we proceeded to play our parts as the nervous paddlers we were. A few other boaters showed up and we double checked to make sure that none of them attempted to talk to or recognize Mr Party, who strolled around seriously inspecting the land and talking to the auctioneer.

It was a sunny, unusually warm November day and there were maybe 25 people milling around the property. The auctioneer and his son were handing out plats of the land from the back of their microphone equipped pickup which

also doubled as their float in the Capital City Christmas parade and were attempting to identify the real players in the auction. We boaters were trying to seem nonchalant as we scanned the crowd for our competition when just before the start of the sale, we were approached by an older gentleman none of us knew. He smoothly introduced himself and explained how he too was a canoeist of the Elkhorn for many years. We idly talked of our situation and inadvertently tested his feud politics by vaguely relating our troubles with old Mrs Saufley. At this point in the conversation, the gentleman held up his hand and then gently informed us that he was in fact Mrs. S's accountant. He then courteously excused himself from our company just as the auctioneer was climbing into the bed of the pickup truck to start the bidding.

After statements about the absolute nature of the auction and hearing no questions from those gathered about the property, the auctioneer began his sing song chant at \$60,000. "...who'll gimme 60, 60,60..." he pleaded while his son walked around in front of the crowd beckoning and motioning with his hands like a revival preacher looking for converts. "...who'll gimme 60, 60,60...Come on ya'll, this here is prime creek front land" boomed the auctioneer "...who'll gimme 50, 50, 50... now then 45,45,45..." He slowly worked his way down and then at \$20,000 - WHAM - someone off to the left in the crowd motioned a bid. The boaters had no problem looking stunned. In our presale strategy meeting that morning we had decided that we would not bid beyond \$17,000. If we were to stick to the plan, the "boaters" couldn't even make a bid... we were "out" of money. The horizon line of the drop and the sound of the auctioneer's gavel all that was left and we hadn't even caught an eddy. The boaters were all following Mr Party's lead now.

That first bid was immediately followed with a second, and then a third and fourth all coming within seconds of each other. It was maddeningly unclear, at least to me, exactly who was bidding since the signals were subtle and the action so fast. I could feel the pulse pounding in my ears as I focused on Mr Party, our shiny green log home man on the scene, calmly wag his finger at \$29k. The auctioneer's son was in major arm swinging and pulling motion now. He seemed in disbelief that we boaters weren't bidding. He cajoled the crowd and harangued everyone over and over looking to pull a nod or signal from among us. But the boaters just looked around and kicked the dust in mock resignation and remained silent. Finally the auctioneer's son gave up pulling for more money from the crowd and "Going once...going twice...SOLD for \$29,000!" thundered from the auctioneer who waved towards Mr Party. Burgess looked over, threw a subdued air punch with his clinched fist and whispered "YES!"

We had won but we were still trying not to act like winning bidders. It had been agreed that if the boaters held the final bid, those of us present would not make a scene. We didn't want to celebrate too strongly or give an impression of gloating. That time would come later. The Saufley Family owns the entire ridge line overlooking the newly acquired AW Acres and the consensus feeling was to be as low key as possible. There was still great paranoia regarding the vague wording of the zoning laws and besides, we were neighbors with the

Saufley's and the other landowners now and we wanted the feud finished as soon as possible.

David Quarles looked slightly stunned when Burgess walked over to tell him quietly that the paddlers actually won the bid. As David was new to the BWA he had never laid eyes on Mr Party. Nor had any idea of the amount of money that had been collected. As a seller and a donor David had excused himself from AW Acre council decisions until after the sale. When Burgess let him in on the scheme he had no idea AW had won the final bid. He thought he was going to be watching Abe Lincoln in a silk warmup jacket build a log home on the creek. I walked over to the auctioneer and authorized the AW 10% deposit check and confirmed that American Whitewater would indeed be taking possession of the deed at closure in 30 days. Time to break out the bourbon and party.

With a flurry of signatures in an 18th century, walnut paneled Frankfort, KY law office American Whitewater took full possession of it's latest land acquisition and a became a property taxpayer in Kentucky. Through the focused action of members AW was continuing to set new precedents for action in securing whitewater access. By providing the infrastructure to make such donations of the land a reality, American Whitewater, and dedicated people are helping to promote the strongest, most assured method possible to obtain whitewater access protection - direct property purchase.

But the land acquisition and success of the auction only marks the end of the shuttle in the saga of AW Acres. We've all still got to run this thing. Make it as environmentally correct a paddler's parking lot and gathering spot as we can. That will take more planning and money and volunteers. We also need to be good neighbors and cool the feud. The courts may already be helping that along amid CanoeKY's successful defense of it's zoning lawsuit with the county and the judge's ruling effectively evaporating any looming worries over zoning issues and the whitewater access of AW Acres.

Now it's time to write the next chapter in the Elkhorn saga and draft new tales of paddlers working to preserve and enhance their sport. I hope it's been raining or melting water into your favorite drainage while you've been reading this article. Get out there. Go paddling and join up with your boating friends for fun, safety and strength in keeping each other's whitewater streams open and free. While you're out there you might reflect on this saga and how one band of committed, creative paddlers working together with American Whitewater faced the challenges and helped to forever expand your paddling opportunities.

For more information on how you can help support AW Acres or secure and protect access on your favorite or endangered stream please contact:
Jason Robertson
American Whitewater Access Director
1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 301-589-9453 email: Jason@amwhitewater.org
or visit our web site: <http://www.awa.org>

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Application for BWA Beginners Clinic

Clinic Dates: April 29th & 30th, 2000 Registration deadline: April 17, 2000

A separate application and release and waiver of liability form must be completed for each applicant.

Name: _____
First Last

Age: ____ Sex (circle one): F M Weight: _____ Height: ____ feet ____ inches Street Address:

State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: (Day): _____ (Evening): _____

E-mail: _____

SKILL LEVEL: The following information is very important in order to form classes of students with approximately equal skills:

- BEGINNER: Very little or no experience paddling in whitewater. Those switching boats (decked and open for the first time).
 ADVANCED BEGINNER: Paddled in whitewater less than 10 times and have been exposed to eddy turns, peel outs, ferries and understand the vocabulary used on the river.
 INTERMEDIATE: Have paddled in whitewater more than 10 times, understand the vocabulary used on the river, have a consistent roll in the pool.

Have you attended roll sessions? _____ Do you have a flat water or pool roll? _____ Do you have a whitewater roll? _____

CLASS SELECTION (Please circle the class you wish to attend.) Kayak Solo C-1 Canoe Tandem Canoe* If tandem, partner's name: _____

Is there a person with whom you want to be in class? Their name: _____

Check the equipment that you will need to borrow or rent: boat

paddle size (circle one): S M L XL

life jacket size (circle one): S M L XL sprayskirt size (circle one): S M L XL

helmet size (circle one): S M L XL

We also recommend that you rent a wetsuit and/or a spray top dependant upon weather conditions and water temperature.

GENERAL SURVEY 1. My swimming ability is (circle one) fair good very good 2. Previous whitewater schools attended (if BWA clinic please indicate instructors if

possible): _____ 3. Type of flat-water experience or training:

_____ 4. List rivers you have paddled, number of times and in what kind of boat:

5. Other information which will help us to evaluate your skills for your class assignment:

6. Medical problems your instructor needs to know:

Diabetic Hemophiliac Seizure Disorder Other _____ Allergic to: Bee stings (Other _____)

CLINIC FEE AND WAIVER (You must sign the BWA waiver) \$60 per person if received by 4-1-2000. **\$75 per person, if received after 4-1-99 (includes \$15 late registration fee).**

No registrations accepted after 4-17-2000

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____ (Parent or guardian signature if participant is under 18 years of age)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Amy Shipman: Clinic Director 606-278-4236:
shipmana@lexmark.com OR MAIL TO: BWA P.O. Box 4231 Lexington, Kentucky 40544

BWA BEGINNERS CLINIC RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

I, _____, desiring to participate in the BWA Beginners Clinic, do hereby declare that I understand and accept the following facts of life on the river:

1. Canoeing, kayaking, and rafting, particularly on whitewater rivers, exposes the participants to various safety hazards, including but not limited to: water hazards (boulders, undercut rocks, trees, strainers, water formations such as water falls, holes, keepers, hydraulics, and other obstacles), swimming in turbulent water, using paddling equipment, accidents or illness in remote places without medical facilities, and travel in a vehicle not driven by me.

2. No one but I am responsible for myself when I choose to paddle a particular river or a particular rapid.

3. I further understand that I have no legal duty to assist others, nor does anyone else have a legal duty to render such assistance to me. I certify that I am in good physical condition, that I can swim, and that I have no physical defects or injuries that would prevent me from participating in this activity. I fully understand and agree that, when I participate in canoeing, kayaking, or rafting, there is always the possibility of the unknown, uncontrollable dangers and accidental or other physical injury and death. I know I can be killed, and I willingly assume the risk referred to in paragraph 1, and elsewhere in this release. Therefore, in consideration for granting me the opportunity to participate in the BWA Beginners Clinic, and intending to be legally bound, I hereby release, waive, and discharge my rights to sue the BWA Beginners Clinic, its trip coordinators, instructors, leaders, officers, directors, representatives, agents, employees, and affiliates, and also any landowner or governmental unit which may allow the BWA Beginners Clinic to use its property, for any and all loss or damage of account of injury to my person or on account of my death, which may occur during, in preparation for, or in transit to or from a BWA Beginners Clinic activity. This waiver applies to acts or omissions of ordinary negligence and to any deliberate act intended to promote my safety or well being.

This waiver is signed by me in the interest of permitting BWA Beginners Clinic to exist and to serve the paddling community, and to enable me and my fellow paddlers to feel free to donate their services to improving the sport and to help in training those less skilled in the sport without fear of liability.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS RELEASE AND FULLY UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS. I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY. I SIGN IT OF MY OWN FREE WILL AND I WAS NOT COERCED. SHOULD I WISH TO WITHDRAW AT ANY TIME DURING THE CLINIC, I WILL BE REIMBURSED FOR ANY INSTRUCTIONAL FEES PAID.

PRINT NAME CLEARLY: _____ PHONE: _____

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: _____ DATE: _____

For minors only: GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

_____ (parent or guardian must sign if participant is under 18 years of age)

Address: _____

Sign up for the 2000 BWA Spring Beginner's Clinic!

The 2000 BWA Spring Beginner's Clinic will be held April 29 and 30 on the Emory/Obed river system near Wartburg, TN. The cost will be \$60 per student and will include instruction, the use of gear (a boat, pfd, helmet, paddle and skirt borrowed from BWA members), breakfast both mornings, dinner on Saturday, and camping.

The Clinic is a fund-raiser for the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, a premier contributor to river conservation, and is staffed by our membership. It is designed to be an introduction to white water kayaking or canoeing. The first day is spent practicing basic techniques such as paddle strokes, ferries, eddy turns, and, for some, eskimo rolls. The run consists of Class I/II rapids with the option of running a Class III at the end of the day if students are interested and capable. We tend to regroup students on the second day and tailor the instruction according to the goals, strengths and weakness of the students.

There will be a preparatory meeting which all students are strongly encouraged to attend. This meeting is typically held at an indoor pool so that students may perform the required 'wet-exit' in the comfort of a heated pool versus on the river. Other valuable information is also reviewed at the session. We also strongly recommend that students attend our Roll Sessions to be held on Saturdays from 7 - 9 p.m. at the YWCA on Cross Keys Blvd. Sessions begin on 11/19 and gear and instruction are available on a first come-first serve basis.

The application will be posted on the BWA website: www.surfbwa.org.

If you have questions about the Roll Sessions, Ben Askren (ben01@lexmark.com) is our Safety Chair responsible for those events.

Amy Shipman
BWA 2000 Clinic Director
shipmana@lexmark.com



Amy Shipman on the
Emory/Obed at the 1999 Clinic

Meeting Location for February!

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