

BOWLINES

Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association July/August 2000

Don't miss your next issue of bowlines! Renew your membership today!

In This Issue: **Elkhorn Creek Clean-up 2000**
 Help Preserve the Red River Gorge Trails
 A Paddler's First Descent of the Ocoee
 Excuse Me: River Etiquette
 Back-Paddling thru the pages of the Bowlines:
 The Russell Fork: A Different Kind of River Festival

Elkhorn Creek Clean-up 2000



Zina Merkin

Trying to organize this year's Elkhorn Creek clean-up was a real test of faith - lining up people, boats, permission and then praying for water. Right up until Friday I still hadn't made up my mind if we could or should do it. I checked with Canoe Kentucky, and they said the creek was holding at summer pool, so I told everyone it was a go. I'd made arrangements with Mark Barnett at Franklin County's Division of Solid Waste to make pick-ups at Colston's Lane and the land off Rt. 1900 at Knight's Bridge. I got permission from Jim Beam's safety director to go on their land to pick up around the dam, as well as make a garbage drop off there. We borrowed canoes from Don Spangler, Beuren Garten and Jim Dinger. Actually, I took Jim's canoe without permission while he was out of town, with help from his roommate Aaron, knowing that as the nominated Conservation Officer he could scarcely have refused. Ed Council also gave us the use of one of his canoes for the day, as well as some shuttle help.



Marrea with other BWA members at the Gorge takeout on the Red River after a river clean-up this year.

Help Preserve the Red River Gorge Trails!

In the 70's I saw citizen groups unite to protect the Red River Gorge from being dammed and flooded. In place of the arches and rock houses tucked back in the lush tropical-like setting of the gorge, imagine another stagnant lake like that of Cave Run abuzz with jet skis and motor boats.

Today the protectors of this uniquely beautiful area start with individuals like Russ Miller, who called on his friends and the BWA to shepherd abandoned tires and trash out of the heart of the gorge. Another savior is Aimee Bell of Louisville. She is the contact person, volunteer coordinator and the liaison with the forest service personnel for the trail maintenance group called The Red River Gorge Trail Crew. I first worked with this group in March. Then we worked to repair the fire damage to the Daniel Boone Hut Trail. I knew then these people were serious. What we accomplished was incredible.

Recently, they showed their commitment once again by laying the stones to improve the take-out for the gorge section. Should you like to volunteer with this crew, contact Aimee at

trail_blazer@email.msn.com

Ask her to add your name to the mailing list. They tend to meet one Saturday per month. Expect to spend most of the day (9-5pm). While the work isn't easy it certainly is rewarding with this outstanding group of people.

Marrea Matthews

BOWLINES

Bowlines is the Newsletter of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, PO Box 4231, Lexington, KY, 40544

Club Officers 2000-2001

President	Bruce Rishel	859-245-8096
Vice-President	Amy Shipman	859-278-4236
Treasurer	John Foy	859-278-2536
Secretary	Tim Miller	859-224-3827
Safety	Burgess Carey	859-268-8593
Program	Richard Smithers	859-887-5906
Newsletter	Kathy Cole	859-272-4744
Cyber Communications	Ben Askren	859-255-2768
Conservation	Jim Dinger	859-278-5229
National Paddling		
Film Festival Coordinator	Zina Merkin	859-268-2508
Equipment Coordinator	David Reed	859-527-5898
At-Large Members:	Jessica Hays	859-272-0938
	David Margavage	
Wildwater Cats Rep.	Corrine Voils	859-313-5038
Past President	Gary Hoagland	502-845-2704

Join in on the Fun!

BWA website: <http://www.surfbwa.org>

Join the BWA! BWA membership dues of \$15/individual; \$20/family per year entitles you to receive the newsletter, 10% discounts at many local and out of state outfitter shops, use of club gear, discounts 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 second Tuesday of each month, 7:30pm, at Paisano's in Gardenside, Lexington, KY.

Submission of Newsletter articles preferred on zip or floppy disk (Mac or PC) or typed. Pictures can be digital or ready to be scanned. Please include a stamped envelope for return.

Files can also be e-mailed to: kmcole01@pop.uky.edu

BWA Annual Reunion & River Party!

October 28-29, 2000

Always one of the fun highlights of the year for the BWA!

Reunions of the past have introduced the BWA to many (often hard to believe) tales of the past years paddling.

- Paddling trips for all skills
- Great food!
- Hiking & mountain biking
- Big Club Bonfire on Saturday night.
- More info in Sept./Oct. Bowlines & at BWA website.

**Don't miss the final great BWA event of the year 2000!
Let past members know about the reunion!**



We got to the put-in, and low and behold, the water was NOT at summer pool; more like negative 4 inches. In spite of threats to not go unless there was enough water, President for a while longer Gary Hoagland set a good example and led the way. Besides Gary in his solo boat, there were Carolyn Komar and myself, Ben Askren and Kyle Meserve, Will Fountain and Corrine Voils, and Amy Shipman, Horia and one of Amy's dogs. Ligia and Jeanette Quinn came along in kayaks. We got on the water at around noon.

The creek at this low water was an alien landscape. Many places one or both paddlers had to hop out of the canoes and walk them through the shoals, especially later in the day as they filled up with junk. We had lots and lots of garbage bags, courtesy of National River Cleanup Week and its sponsors, America Outdoors and American Rivers. They provided a nice packet of information about organizing a clean-up, including a publicity kit, liability waivers, etc., none of which applied to our modest efforts, thank goodness.

They also provided a trash inventory sheet, to record the amount and type of trash we hauled out. One of our more interesting finds was an entire garage door, which was hauled up behind the subdivision/trailer park. I'm not sure if it ever actually got picked up by the Solid Waste people or not. I found what I thought was a straight pipe discharging to the left of the island just before the dam, but it turned out to be from a permitted package sewer treatment plant. How well the treatment plant works is in question, and in any case, the area river left of the island is especially nasty and stagnant at low water and should be avoided.

Gary picked up more than 2 full bags of bait containers and beer cans at the dam. Bait containers proved our most plentiful item overall, followed closely by beer bottles and cans, and soda bottles. McDonald's containers were well represented, also Wendy's and Burger King. We picked up around a dozen tires, an

orange plastic safety cone and 2 large orange plastic highway safety barrels, and at least a dozen metal fence posts. There were big wheels and lawn chairs. We passed up an old stove, but Amy and Horia managed to wrestle a large propane tank into their canoe toward the end of the day. The prize for most unusual item goes to Gary, who picked up the (empty) tank to a porta-potty. Watching Gary surf at the FART hole with the safety barrel and porta potty tank in his boat was quite entertaining.

We arrived at AW Acres at around 5 pm, absolutely starving since our trash filled canoes and filthy hands just didn't inspire us to stop and eat along the way. We got there to find Alicia and her



friend John sunbathing, and they pitched right in and helped us unload and carry the trash up to the edge of the parking area. Mr. Party was also there, having spent much of the day mowing and then fixing the mowing equipment, assisted by Dave Merrifield on the weedeater patrol. When all the trash was unloaded, and the boats rinsed out, we washed up, set out my picnic table and some chairs, and proceeded to have snacks and good beer in proper BWA fashion. Many thanks and a boatload of good Karma to all who helped.



My First Descent of the Ocoee

Schuy Roop

I awoke Sunday to the familiar morning campground sounds, less the barking dog from Saturday, of people milling around me. As I lay there thinking what they had done with that dog, my thoughts turned to the day ahead. The Hiwassee sounded relaxing but the Ocoee lurked in my conscience somewhere. I just wasn't sure if I had the energy to deal with that, and I knew David wanted to go. For the moment, I decided to avoid any major planning decisions and let the day present itself as it was suppose to. I began dressing and packing.

David popped his head into the tent with a grin on his face and the twinkle in his eye that he gets when he's going to paddle BIG WATER. "There's a small group going on the Hiwassee and they are self-sufficient, so I am going to the Ocoee", he announced.

"Don't you think we need to stay since we are leading this trip?" I asked hopefully.

He replied with a definite "No, everyone is cool."

I thought about different strategies of him riding with Ben and Merrifield, but they weren't paddling. It was apparent that I was going to be a part of this equation and knew the dreaded decision had to be faced, to paddle or not to paddle the Ocoee? Again, I avoided this, and decided to wait and see how I felt when we got to the river.

The river appeared on our right and David named the rapids as we went past.

I said, "When is the release?"

"It has already released..."

"But there are still so many rocks!" I exclaimed.

I have learned that it is better for me to not study or even see some rapids ahead of time otherwise strange and mysterious stirrings begin in the depths of my stomach. It was then that David mentioned Double Suck causing me to grab my stomach and cry out in pain. "Could it be the fruit I ate for breakfast?" I asked myself. No, I had felt this before. It was that alien being I have come to recognize as FEAR! At David's recommendation, I took two Maalox tablets and stopped looking at the river.

We saw Dale and Prince as we pulled in to the put in. I ran to the bathroom where I met up with Prince. She gave me my options of putting in at the top, which required an aggressive ferry from the get go, and no warm up, or put in below Double Suck. Within a few minutes, I decided on the latter thanks to my friend



Fear violently reminding me of my physical state. I hated these feelings but decided to ride them out, remembering that it is all a part of trying something new. I also knew I had 4 more Maalox tablets. I watched them put in below the dam, an intimidating wall of water creating some powerful current, and was grateful of my decision to meet them down river.

Feeling more relaxed and Fear taking a rest, I headed to Double Suck. It wasn't hard to find. Dave Margavage was there and after talking to him about what to expect down river and hearing their tales of carnage the day before, Fear awoke with a vengeance and I ate two more Maalox. I got my gear down the steep embankment and placed it at the river's edge, with the exception of my boat. I started to bring my boat down holding on to the back strap.

"I'll just let it go down by itself and it'll stop at the bottom," I thought.

Wrong! It went flying down like a torpedo over my gear and into the river. Visions of my gear going into the river, my boat going down the Ocoee without me, how I would explain this to the trio coming down stream and to the club members flew through my head as I made a mad dash down the bank. I retrieved my boat in an eddy just a little bit down stream where a lady sat reading.

"Oops," she said with a smile.

I got a big laugh out of the whole scenario, which my nerves needed desperately. While I waited an old voice said, "Look at all those rocks," and "Wow! That current looks pushy." Then a new voice, a little quieter than the old, said, "Rocks: I know how to negotiate them. Current: well that will be new, but it looks like fun. FUN! Where did that come from?" A smile came over me as I realized that something was changing inside me.

At that point Zina popped her head over the hill. I was so happy to see a familiar face. She gave me words of encouragement and after she left, Mary

came by to chat. I was full of confidence now and ready to get on the river.

The trio arrived and after lunching we got on the river. I made it to the eddy below the big rock near Double Suck. The current was pushy but not too overwhelming. I rolled trying to get rid of my friend Fear. "Okay! Let's go!" I thought. I looked around and the others were calm and in the moment, goofing around in a little current. I of course was already down river in my head. So, I adjusted that mental state and hurried attitude I had, which always gets me into trouble, and turned my thoughts to what was around me. The river has a natural way of bringing me back to the present like the ocean does. I practiced some paddling strokes and ferrying. Finally we headed down river, not without apprehension.

I was to follow Prince and I assure you I was right on her tail. I decided to back off a little realizing that I could get us both in trouble. My little bobble was right before the Doldrums. I needed to work myself left as we went through the rapid to get to the eddy on river left. There were a few rocks in the middle of the river past the eddy, which I needed to avoid. However, I didn't paddle aggressively enough and hit the rocks, which flipped me. My right side was dragged over a friendly and smooth rock bringing my body backward. I hit another rock and I felt my right hand dealing with stone and paddle. I thought, "I have a hands roll let

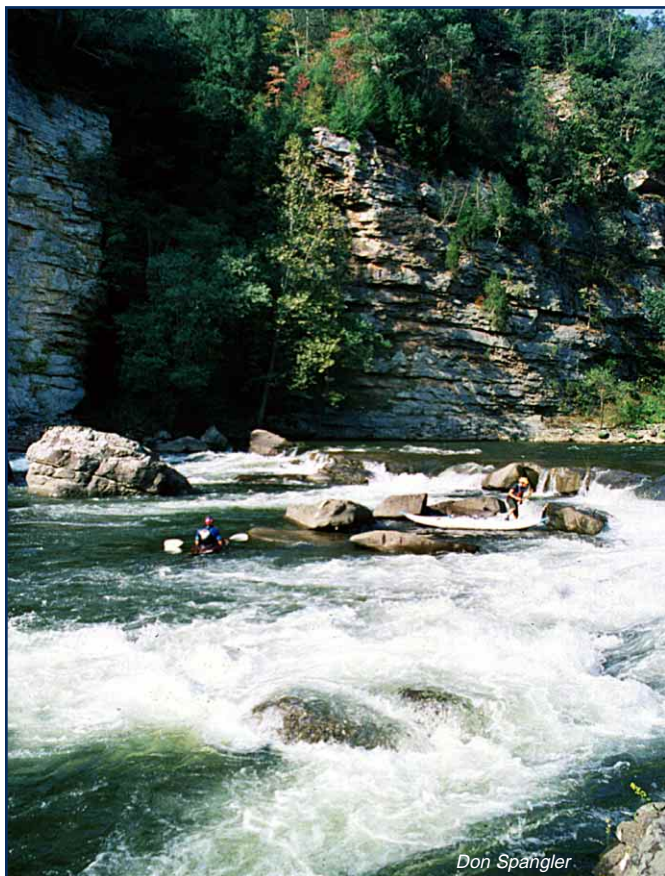
go of the paddle and hold on to the rock," which I did. As I did this I tipped my boat on its edge to get my head out of the water. The current was strong, but I could hold on and I was breathing! Life was good, and I wasn't sure what was below me so I decided to stay and wait for further instructions. I heard someone say push up so I did and then Dave came along side me. He told me to go ahead.

"I don't have a paddle," I yelled.

He handed me his and we made it to the next eddy on the left where Dale was. Prince went after my paddle on river right. Dale offered Dave his paddle, which he did not turn down. We got over to Prince and did what felt like the musical paddle switch. I only had a stiff neck and felt great because I didn't even think of pulling that skirt!

The rest of the way was smooth sailing. We ran Table Saw straight through and it was huge and crazy. I am so glad I didn't eddy out to look at it. As we approached Hell Hole I didn't forget my aggressive paddle this time and missed the hole. I got out there and felt good.

Mental notes to first timers: bring Maalox Tablets, follow an awesome paddler like Prince, accept that feeling of fear as part of the process, and trust yourself to have fun--did I say that! A big thanks to Prince, Dale, and David for taking care of me.



GAULEY SEASON DATES:

The Gauley season consists of five four-day (Fri-Sat-Sun-Mon) weekends and one two-day weekend (Sat-Sun). That makes a total of SIX Gauley weekends and 22 days of releases. The FIRST Gauley weekend is ALWAYS the first weekend AFTER Labor Day weekend.

Once again the West Virginia Rivers Coalition will be providing their annual hard boat shuttle service at the Gauley take-out during Gauley Season. A donation of five dollars helps protect rivers, and saves boaters a tiring hike. For more info about this service contact Kim at wvrc@neumedia.net.

Gauley Festival

September 16 Summersville, WV

This is the Granddaddy of River Festivals featuring the famous "Gauley Mall" of paddling gear and service bargans, huge silent auction and the latest paddling videos provided by the National Paddling Film Festival.

Nicholas County Veterans Memorial Park
Rt.19, Summersville,WV

Information:

http://www.awa.org/awa/events/00GF_page1.html

Don't miss this one!

“Excuse me while I crash into your eddy.”

The Ins and Outs of River Etiquette

Dena Foltz
<http://www.outdoorplay.com>



There are no rules posted at the put-in, no handbook, no river cops to monitor rude paddlers. River etiquette is more common sense. As more and more people become addicted to paddling, river etiquette, and common consideration become more important. These "rules of the river" will make paddling more enjoyable for you and others who share the river. Remember, we are all out there for the same reason - to play and have fun!

Be ready to go

Nothing is more annoying than having to wait an hour at the put in for someone who "oops" left his or her spray skirt at home.

Tell someone in your group if you leave

Your group will wish you had drowned if they spend two hours looking for you only to discover that you took out early and hitched a ride to the takeout. You will save worry, frustration, and time by letting someone in your group know if you decide to take a break.

Check upstream for oncoming boaters

Rafts and others coming downstream have the right of way. It only takes getting run over once to figure out why this rule is important.

Always look upstream before leaving an eddy and before getting on a wave to play.

Please see the above rule. Though the general rule has been "yield to people running downriver", those running downriver should try to pick lines that don't interrupt someone's surf if possible.

Leave plenty of room between boaters

Don't tailgate. Save "bumper boats" for a game of kayak polo. Wait for a boater to move through a tight spot before following. Different boat designs will move at different speeds. Adjust the space you need accordingly.

Do not cut in front of a boater running a drop

Do not enter a crowded drop or eddy when there is no room

It is very unnerving to have someone come crashing into your eddy. If there isn't room in an eddy you need to catch, wait upstream in another eddy until there is

room for you.

When waiting in an eddy, move away from the eddy line to allow more room for other paddlers to enter -- Unless you enjoy people plowing into you as they try to enter the eddy.

Wait for a group to move through a rapid before you pass

Try to pass in a calm section of the river.

Limit groups to a moderate size

Smaller groups are less intrusive.

Respect other river users

Pass fishermen quietly without disturbing their hole. Make room for others at heavily used access points. Load and unload your boats as quickly as possible and move your vehicle so others can use your spot.

Talk with other boaters on the rivers to decide campsites

This will prevent conflicts later on when you are tired and hungry and less likely to compromise.

Don't be a hole hog

The lines are getting longer and longer in eddies, be considerate tailor the length of the ride to the number of people waiting in line.

Wait your turn

It is bad river karma to cut in line. Unless the person ahead of you is not paying attention. Then it is your duty to keep the line moving -- step up!

Practice minimum impact and help maintain the pristine river environment

Pack out all garbage and the garbage left behind by others.

Show respect for locals & private property

These people own the land you paddle through. Paddlers are lucky to have the limited access they do, don't ruin it for everyone. It is not part of the experience to be chased by some irate landowner with a shotgun.

Keep the noise to a minimum

A few hoots and hollers are fine, but excessive yelling and screaming can be annoying to other river users.

Don't walk through other people's campsites

When putting in or taking out, respect other's space, if

you must pass through, ask permission.

The group you are paddling with may have its own set of rules that you will have to quickly learn and abide by—regardless of how nebulous the rule may be. For instance, this is what one paddler informed me: "Don't swim, if you do swim you owe me a beer (unless you are a significant other, then it depends how significant you are)." So I guess I can assume that if I swim and my significant other makes me buy him a beer, I'm not looking at a very long-term relationship.

As always, the most important rule: Have fun and be safe!

"BLUES AIN'T PRETTY"

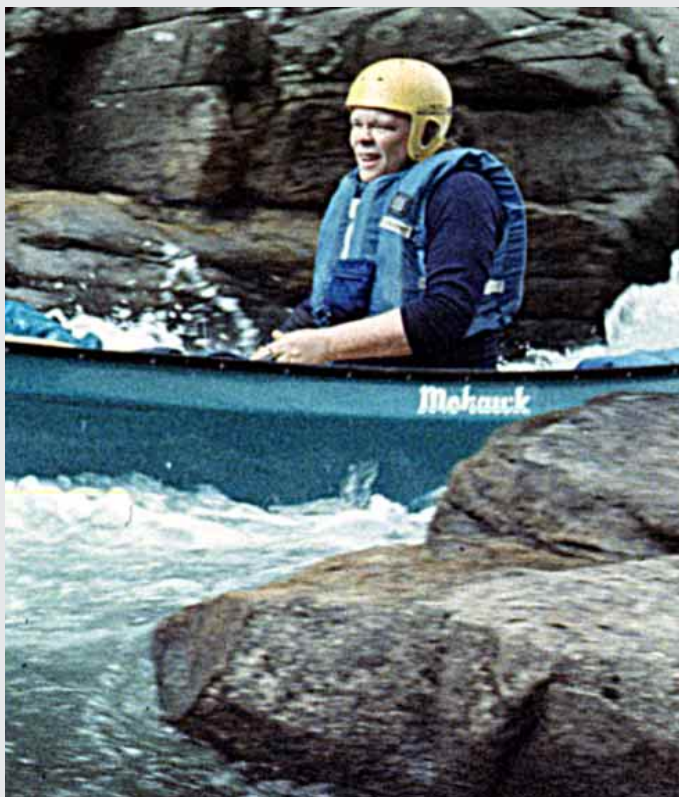
*Butch Quire
1951-2000*

There ain't no gold
Left in my life
Got a soulless job
Hardly see my wife
Wore out my soul
Like a cheap pair of
pants
Constant troubles
Crush me on the wheel

(Chorus)
The blues ain't pretty
The blues ain't pretty
The blues ain't pretty
It's just what you feel

My woman don't know
me
For what I am
I had so much love
I had big plans
Can't make much good
From a broken life
Under my skin
Just a twistin' knife

(Chorus)
The blues ain't pretty
The blues ain't pretty



All but two young boys
And a wife so brave
I can't get no pleasure
In whiskey and pills
Lord knows I try to
But it's made me ill

(Chorus)
The blues ain't pretty
The blues ain't pretty
The blues ain't pretty
It's just what you feel

Last night a friend
Give me a call
Give me a brand new
reason
And a brand new song
He said "the blues ain't
pretty
The blues is the truth
Just depends on you
And what you choose".

The blues ain't pretty
It's the choices in your life

Good man had cancer
It ate everything

(Chorus)
The blues ain't pretty
The blues ain't pretty
The blues ain't pretty
It's just what you choose

Russel

Back-Paddling thru the pages of the Bowlines:



From the Sept/Oct 1998 issue of BowLines

I was talking to a boater a few days ago about the Russell Fork River Festival. I explained about the incredible river, the beautiful gorge, the friendly residents of the area that hang banners in the middle of the street that proclaim "Welcome Boaters!", and about the festival itself....a homespun down-to-earth event with lots of music, camping, and good times for just \$10.00. His comment was : "Yea, but you don't have a boat raffle to encourage boaters to come."

Perhaps I should not have been, but I was taken back for a moment by his comment. True, we did not have a boat to raffle, but the idea of the event was to avoid the commercialism of many of the river events that take place these days. Not that there is anything wrong with those events. Much has been accomplished by those events over the years: improved access, guaranteed flows, river preservation, etc. But the idea for the Russell Fork River Festival has been to have a unique "happening" for a unique river. It was to help restore a feeling and culture that has been disappearing from rivers and river campgrounds.

With the tremendous growth in river usage over the past decade or so, some of the things we go to the river to avoid are appearing there. Crowds, disputes, self-centered attitudes, thefts, trash, lack of respect for the river and the environment, profit over a good time for everyone, actions by visitors that make them unwanted visitors by locals, harassment from local authorities because of many of these things; all these things we hear stories about or experience first-hand.

This summer I visited the Yough at Ohiopyle, PA. As we drove into the small town, we were met with a sight none of us could believe! It was curb to curb vehicles and hundreds of people milling about or in long lines waiting to buy a pass so that they could get a time to put on the river. Parking my van anywhere within less than a ten minute walk to the put-in was essentially impossible. If you are not lucky enough to get a pass early, you may not boat that day.

A couple of weeks later I was at the Ocoee and was reminded that it was no bastion of wild and open space either. While I was on the river, I was run over

by a raft (while sitting in an eddy), avoided running holes and playing on waves that I used to enjoy because of boaters not willing to give way to anyone else, and was told of a fight between a boater and a raft guide and his passengers.

I do not mean to say that everyone that goes to the river these days is selfish and uncaring. Far from it; in the main, boaters are a great and wonderful group of people to be around. But, ten or twenty years ago would anyone have believed that this was the future of boating on rivers?

For most of us, the river was an escape into the wilderness. It was a special time to become one with the river, to experience its wildness, its beauty, and the peace that comes from being a part of



But the times move on. The one other factor that limited use of the river for most was lack of year round flows. But that could change with a proposal to build another dam on the river

nature and a good group of friends. When we got back to our everyday work we could not contain our resulting joy and would often tell anyone who we could get to listen about it. When it rained we were the only ones that were truly excited... especially if it was a Thursday or Friday. Well, in time we convinced enough of our friends to give it a try, even if it just meant going on a raft trip, and running rivers became very popular.

The crowds came, some for a day, some for a weekend, some for the thrill of running a river, others because of seeing boat acrobatics, while others just tagged along. For many, it was not enough to have the river, they needed fancy camp-grounds, outfitters, restaurants, motels, gift shops, bars, and all the things they left at home. And with all these things came some of the cultures that were new to the river community. For many rivers there is no going back.

Yet with this prosperity a great many things become possible: better and more kinds of boats to use, easier access, some protection for the river and so on. Seasonal jobs did offer some employment. Perhaps this is the way it needs to be for some rivers, but let us hope not for all or most.

People have been paddling the Russell Fork for many years in very small numbers. Not being close to a major population center or having an interstate nearby were a couple of the factors that until now keep it from changing.

system. That would bring prosperity to an area where some would welcome it. But is it at too high a price?

Looking at how change came to many other once beautiful and unique areas you have to wonder and question it. We should not want to deny the river to those who would like to come and be a part of it. We should not want to deny prosperity to those that might benefit from some of the changes that a new dam may bring. But can there not be another way?

The Russell Fork Festival is an attempt to help find those answers. We respect the river for what it is: beautiful, natural, and unique in its gorge and rapids. We respect the people that we have met and come to know for what they are: friendly, kind, and very hospitable to those who visit them and the Russell Fork area.

The Festival is an open invitation to all those who



Don Spangler

nized event with the focus (the Russell Fork) and interaction between each other be the reason for coming together. It is a simple idea but one that is often lost or ignored at such gatherings.

Meeting new people, sharing ideas, stories, and concerns is much needed by all who love and care about the Russell Fork area. While we boaters have a view

concerning the river proper, there is much more to the surrounding drainage that we need to learn and appreciate. Hikers, climbers, photographers, and many others will see and appreciate things we should learn about.

It should also be an opportunity for all of us to re-emphasize those things that sometimes are forgotten on other rivers. The Russell Fork should be a special place. It should be a place where the tensions, attitudes and less than desirable practices of contemporary life can be put aside.

We do not need to bring the problems that we are starting to see on some other rivers to this one. Instead this could serve as an example of how change could be positive.

Do we need a boat to raffle to make this Festival successful? I hope not.

Don Spangler



Don Spangler

value the experience to be found at the Russell Fork: climbers, hikers, boaters, bikers and many other groups. It is our hope that all could find ways to use and enhance the area without seriously changing things that are important to all.

The other difference about the festival is the belief that people can come together in less than a highly orga-

The Cheoah River

The Cheoah River is located in the extreme southwestern corner of NC, near Robbinsville. It is about 1.5 hours from Knoxville, TN and 2 hours from Asheville, NC. Normally the nine-mile section between the Santeetlah Dam and Calderwood Reservoir is dewatered. However, as part of a multi-dam relicensing project, four whitewater flow tests were conducted last week. I ran it at all four flows and at three of them it was a hoot!



We put in at the little store about six miles upstream of the Tapoco Lodge (the distance is a guess but it is the only store in the area) and took out on the Little Tennessee's Calderwood Reservoir.

Though I haven't confirmed it on a topo map, the rumor is that the Cheoah averages 100 fpm. The gradient is fairly steady. This means that with the exception of 2 or 3 half mile or so sections, the river is unusually continuous, more so than anything else with a similar volume of water in the Southeast. Some were calling it "warm western-style paddling."

At flows of about 1000 cfs or under, the top 2/3rd's and lower 1/3 are about a grade different in difficulty, with the top similar in difficulty to the Ocoee. The risks are greater, however, as much of the channel is heavily lined with trees and brush, giving the run a nature akin to paddling during a flood. The main technical challenge is presented by the frequent series of offset holes. Because of the trees and brush, it is not a good place to paddle if you don't have a rock solid roll and the ability to read water well on the fly (bank scouting would not be fun). The lower 1/3 is better defined, with a number of classic drops. My favorites were the sequence of four drops with the biggest single drop on the river (a ledge about 8 feet high) being the third and the drop beginning at the bridge downstream of the Tapoco Lodge. There were many, many waves to surf and a number of very playable holes, including two potential rodeo sites: one at Tapoco Lodge and one at the end of the drop beginning at the bridge downstream of the Lodge.

At the highest level we paddled (1,130 cfs), the top and bottom sections were much closer in difficulty as the offset holes were beginning to get sticky. The bottom didn't change much, so the result was a run that was a lot more fun but not any scarier (assuming strong class IV skills, and keeping in mind that the Ocoee only requires strong class III skills). If more of the trees and brush were removed, the upper run would almost certainly get easier at every level as paddlers wouldn't be forced to run through the meat of the

holes and the danger of an entrapment would be lower.

This is definitely a river to get on if you have the chance! Unfortunately, it may be three years, if ever, before regularly scheduled releases begin. However, as part of the relicensing process, the USGS has installed two online gauges. This will make it possible to catch one of the infrequent unscheduled releases that occur after particularly heavy storms.

The gauge I paid most attention to is located at Bearpen Gap, just downstream of the bridge dividing the upper and lower sections of the river. Its name and URL are: Cheoah River near Bearpen Gap near Tapoco, NC -- http://wwwnc.usgs.gov/rt-cgi/gen_stn_pg?station=0351706800

Rod Baird (one of the prime movers behind the test) did a good job summarizing the flows:

- Flow #1** - 950 CFS = 4.50 feet on the Bearpen Gap gauge - bony for rafts, quality river running for hard boats.
- Flow #2** - 670 CFS = 4.15 feet - unacceptable for rafts, undesirable for hard boats.
- Flow #3** - 1130 CFS = 4.70 feet - thrilling for rafts, unique for hard boats. Reminiscent of the Upper Gauley in terms of push.
- Flow #4** - 1010 CFS = 4.55 feet - excellent for rafts, high quality for hard boats.

My guess is that this river could be run MUCH higher; there are reports of it being run as high as 3,000 cfs.

Chris Bell, Asheville, NC
First posted to BoaterTalk:
<http://www.boater-talk.com>

How to help make scheduled releases a reality.

1. If you get the opportunity to run this river, e-mail the level and your impressions to John Gangemi at AW.

John is leading the negotiations on the releases and needs your input. The more folks who have run this river and the greater the number of levels at which they have run it the better! John's address is: jgangemi@digisys.net. You should also be able to link to his address from the AWA page: <http://www.awa.org>

2. Join at least one of the organizations fighting for releases.

The greater the number of people in an organization, the greater its negotiating power. Being able to say, "I represent 250 people" rather than 200 makes a big difference because the "powers that be" know most people are not "joiners" and frequently increase membership numbers by a factor of 10 (or more!) to get an idea of the true interest.

Groups involved in the relicensing project include: American Whitewater, Trout Unlimited, Tennessee Clean Water Network, Western North Carolina Alliance, Chota Canoe Club, Western Carolina Paddlers, Sierra Club (WENOCA Chapter). For information on joining the AWA, visit: <http://www.awa.org> For information on joining the Western Carolina paddlers, e-mail: LaniPegi@aol.com.

3. Become better informed.

Do so by visiting the Tapoco Project Citizen's Resource Page: <http://www.tcwn.org/tapoco/>.

The Bluegrass Wildwater Association Presents the 6th Annual

Russell Fork River Rendezvous



(Monday thru Monday)

October 2 - 9, 2000

Kiwanas Park, Haysi, Va.

A week long "Gathering" supporting the Russell Fork River!

Enjoy the cascading rythms flowing from our stream of
consciousness as we gather to honor the River!

Fun for all! Come Give to the River!

Music by many musicians & bands

- Theme Bon Fires under the moon!
- Stage Performances Friday Oct.6 through Sunday Oct. 8.
- Expert Class V whitewater race (Oct. 7, 2 pm) through the Gorge!
- Used gear swaps • Private Vending
- Activist Exhibits ("Frankly My Dear, I don't want a Dam!")
- Vegetarian, Non-Vegetarian and all foods in between!
- Workshops (Boat outfitting, Yoga, Drum, etc.)
- Of course, "Spontaneous Happenings!"

***The Phestival... unique, grass roots, & old style.
Emphasizing an eco-activism gathering of People in Tribal
Fashion having fun!***

*This is a beautiful & wonderful river canyon. If you like to
canoe/kayak(easy to difficult), hike, bike, climb, or just see an
incredible r iver gorge, this is the place for you to come this
october!*

**This event has become a major fund raising event for helping a
river thanks to the efforts of the BWA. The Rendezvous needs
your help, especially the weekend of the 7th and 8th.
For more information on the Festival or to volunteer call: Brent
Austin: (859) 278-2011, 632 Cardinal Lane, Lexington, Ky,40503 or go
to <http://www.surfbwa.org/russellfork/> or to
<http://www.kymtnet.org/wwatch/wwatch.htm>**

Your BWA dues are due! You need to send your check at once to:

Bluegrass Wildwater Association, PO Box 4231, Lexington, KY, 40544

BWA membership dues of \$15/individual; \$20/family per year entitles you to receive the newsletter, 10% discounts at many local and out of state outfitter shops, use of club gear, discounts at pool rolling sessions, a listing in the BWA Handbook, a stream gauge guide, and web site with a listserv for member's messages.



**Bluegrass Wildwater Association
PO Box 4231
Lexington, Ky. 40504**