

# BOWLINES

Award Winning Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association since 1976. May/June 2022

## In our Own Words.....

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Boat Building, What is that All About  
The Elkhorn Trash Bash in on the Road this June 25

You're a new  
Paddler in the BWA,  
did the Clinic,  
ran the Elkhorn &  
are ready for more!

So  
What  
is  
Next?



# Looking Ahead

Second Tuesday of the Month, 7:30 pm

## BWA Monthly Meeting

For more information on  
Club Meetings & Activities  
always check the online Calendar...

<https://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/events>

BWA web site: <https://www.bluegrasswildwater.org>



### Russell Fork Clean-Up.

This year we decided to take the *Elkhorn Creek Trash Bash* on the road and are doing it on the *Russell Fork River* on the weekend of June 25th. We will be cleaning the section which leads into the confluence from upstream of the town of Haysi to the Thunder River campground. We will also be cleaning the Upper Russell Fork from the Dam down to Garden Hole and the Lower from Ratliff Hole Campground to the beach on the far side of Elkhorn City. Camping will be available and free for all volunteers at the Ratliff Hole campground as will dinner on Saturday night.  
Bob Larkin



The BWA wishes to thank Canoe Kentucky for its support.  
We urge you to patronize them for your outdoor needs.

Check out Bowlines Online Archive with many great issues going back to the nineties!

Issue Archive:

<http://bwa.shuttlepod.org/Newsletter>

A must read for all members, our 30th Anniversary issue:

[http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/bowlines/BL30thAnnv\\_Aug06.pdf](http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/bowlines/BL30thAnnv_Aug06.pdf)

# BOWLINES

Bowlines is the Newsletter of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, POB 4231, Lexington Ky, 40504

## Club Officers 2021-2022

President	Sandra Broadus	859-983-4475
Vice-President	Ben Mudd	859-576-9834
Treasurer	Kyle Koeberlein	502-370-1289
Secretary	Robert Watts	859-554-8489
Safety	Dave Forman	859-550-9040
Bowlines Newsletter Program	Don Spangler	859-277-7314
Floyd Miracle		
Cyber Communications	Michael Williams	859-893-0114
Conservation	Angus Milton	
Film Festival Coordinator	Emily Grimes	859-797-6988
Equipment Coordinator	Jansen Koeberlein	270-703-0352
At-Large Member	Damon Rosenbarker	
Membership Coordinator	Terri Covington Brunjes	

### Join in on the Fun!

Join the BWA! BWA Membership \$20/individual; \$25/Family year entitles you to receive the newsletter, 10% discounts at many local and out of state outfitter shops, use of club equipment, discount at pool rolling sessions, a listing in the BWA Handbook, a stream gauge guide, and web site with a forum for member's messages & a parking pass for the Elkhorn.

Meetings are held at 7:30, the second Tuesday of each month at location announced on our website: <http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org>

**BWA members want to read your story!  
Short or long. Sad or Funny.  
Tell us your paddling related story!**

Files can be e-mailed to the Editor: [DonSpang@aol.com](mailto:DonSpang@aol.com)



## About the BWA's Bowlines

The Bowlines has been a unique record of the BWA and its members. Unique in that it has been more than a listing of club activities and general information about paddling and related issues. When you read Bowlines you read about each of us and what we thought and did over the years. Members have contributed articles not only about paddling, conservation, and the club, but also stories crafted with humor, imagination, and the spirit of enthusiasm of life and enjoyment of each other. These are only a small portion of the many articles worth rereading. There have been songs, poems, soap operas, jokes, cartoons, wedding announcements, birth announcements, and unique trip reports among all the issues. Not what you might think you would see in a whitewater club newsletter.

We owe a thank you to all the newsletter editors that spent countless hours preparing each issue. To all you club members a big BWA hand for your contributions. Please keep it up! Now dig in and enjoy old memories or chuckle at the amusing stories, poems and pictures...



# BWA Spring Clinic 2022 at the Pigeon River



*Ben Mudd*

Our spring beginner's clinic was a great success! Held May 14-15 at the Pigeon River camping at Fire Fox Riverside Campground, we had 36 students divided into 8 classes. Despite some major last-minute changes that had to be made when we learned that there wouldn't be enough water for a release on the Russell Fork, we were able to come together and make a new plan to still carry out a successful clinic. Fox Fire and the Pigeon turned out to be a great venue for the class, and Will Samples' fine cuisine kept everyone well fed.

On Saturday we had a full commercial release so our classes were able to organize themselves based on the students' confidence level to work different sections of the river. Our novice class led by Hanley worked on basic skills in flat water and class 1 between the public takeout for the Upper Pigeon in Hartford and our campsite, our beginner classes worked on their class 2 skills on the Lower Pigeon putting on at Fox Fire, and our advanced classes (including the teenagers class led by Michael Broadwill and Ben Murphy!) headed up to Walters power plant to work on their class 3 skills on the Upper Pigeon. Michael in particular should be commended for his quick reaction to a student becoming foot entrapped during a swim, quickly stabilizing the student's position to allow him to work his foot free and keep going without injury. Reminder to everyone not to stand up in moving water!

Sunday, however, there was no planned release so water was low. We had a discussion about what to do, and most of the students decided to try the Upper at low water. This was a big step up for some of them, but they rose to the challenge admirably. Most of the main rapids were class 2+ to 3- at this level so we had a few



swims but our instructors and safety boaters kept everyone safe and on track while upping their skills. Accelerator was the most challenging rapid at this water level, a solid class 3 with several moderate sized lateral waves and a rock at the bottom that much of the current pushed into. I was running sweep so I only saw our last three classes go through, but those who I watched performed excellently. There were a few combat rolls (including at least one instructor) but no swims that I saw. I also want to shout out the instructors and safety boaters who got out on the rocks to set safety at critical points. Great work everyone!



***Accelerator was the most challenging rapid!***

The original plan for clinic had been to go to the Russell Fork river on the Kentucky/Virginia border and camp at Ratliff Hole, but lower than expected rainfall in the area this spring meant that the Corps of Engineers decided they didn't have enough water in the lake for a recreational release in spring. It was a bit of a scramble to decide on a plan B with less than two weeks to go until clinic. Options considered included the Pigeon, the Hiwassee/Ocoee, the Nolichucky, the French Broad, and even the Elkhorn. Luckily, Fox Fire had plenty of space for us and we decided that the Pigeon would be our best option under the circumstances. It unfortunately meant a few students were too far away to be able to go, but overall it worked out well.



***Hanley Loller getting things going.***

The entire clinic couldn't have happened without the hard work of a huge team of volunteers. We had as many volunteers as we did students, and it's their hard work that made the entire thing possible. I would particularly like to thank our lead instructor Hanley Loller, our club president and volunteer wrangler Sandra Broadwill, our camp boss and behind the scenes guru Bob Larkin, our gear czar Emily Grimes, and our head chef Will Samples. All of our volunteers made amazing contributions to the effort but these five went above and beyond in helping make the clinic happen despite the chaotic circumstances.

I would also like to thank our students for their enthusiasm and readiness to learn. Y'all are the future of our community and the reason we're here. I look forward to paddling with you all again in the future, and hope you'll all consider paying it forward by volunteering with next year's clinic and other events in our community. See you on the water!

Ben Mudd  
BWA Vice President  
Spring Clinic Coordinator



***Food is always popular!***

# So What is Next?

Like Paddling So far?

Here are somethings to consider about making  
Paddling & the BWA Important In Your life.



So you have been to the BWA Spring Clinic, perhaps paddled the Elkorn and a couple of other streams, enjoyed what you have experience so far about paddling and think you want to become a serious whitewater paddler. Good! There are many in the BWA that say we think that is something you will enjoy. But as with many things we do in our life, there is often a lot we do not know and would like to know. So here are things that long time BWA paddlers will like tell you about being a serious paddler.

## **Why do we like paddling, especially, Whitewater?**

It is exciting and fun! It gets your heart beating faster and gives you a challenge both physically and emotionally. Paddling streams is good exercise and you get a lot of satisfaction when you run something new that you may be unsure about doing it successfully. Yes, there will be failures too, perhaps a cold and bumpy swim, but that is a part of learning. Those difficult times will provide you with a good story to share around the campfires. We all love to tell stories and work at making them better, more dramatic or funnier with each retelling.

Another thing about paddling, you do it with others for safety but you will share your stories with them or as we always called them "adventures", or in some cases "misadventures". That is part of often making some of the best friends you will ever have. The adventures you will share of travelling to new places, running new streams, and being together is something to be prized.

In addition to having fun with friends, there are other interests that you can also pursue on your paddling trips: photography, camp cooking, history, geology and so on. As in other parts of our lives, being active and contributing to your time and skills to an effort, you will almost always find you get back much more reward than you put forth in your hard work. The same is true when you help with the BWA and those within the our club. It is a satisfaction you will always appreciate.

**So this is an issue of Bowlines about**

***BWA Paddling Adventures to help you discover yours!!***



## Bluegrass Wildwater Association

# BWA



## Why should you want to be an active member in one of the best paddling clubs around?

### **The objectives of Bluegrass Wildwater Association (BWA) are:**

1. Encourage the enjoyment, preservation, and exploration of American Waterways by human- powered water craft such as Canoes, Kayaks, Rafts, SUPs or other means.
2. Protect the Wilderness character of these Waterways through the conservation of water, wildlife, forests, and parks.
3. Promote safety and proficiency in all aspects of Wildwater activities and to promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness waterways and Whitewater sports.
4. Chart and preserve wilderness waterways in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.
5. To come together, socialize and paddle whitewater streams and rivers the world over.

*From the BWA By Laws*

### **BWA Membership**

Your membership supports river advocacy large and small and provides you with great benefits! You can join or renew your membership online at: <https://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/membership>

Membership in the club include things that are important to us all:

Discounts at select outfitters (ie. Canoe Kentucky)  
Elkhorn Creek Parking Pass  
River Clean-ups

Special Club Events & Gatherings  
Roll session discounts  
Advocating for river access & protections

### **BWA and American Whitewater**

The BWA is affiliated with American Whitewater (AW) <https://www.americanwhitewater.org>, a national organization working to preserve rivers and ensure access for all boaters; hosting events like the annual Gauley Festival, and the other annual River events to raise awareness and promote our sport. AW is constantly working out front and behind the scenes, to further the interests of the whitewater boating community. AW also publishes The American Whitewater Journal, an excellent paddle sports magazine, available online or mailed to AW members each month.

The AW Web page contains all the information you need to know on rivers, river levels, gauges, and access. Join today by using their Web page, it's a great organization. The Web page is an incredible real-time tool for the white-water enthusiast and is at: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org>. Check it out for the latest information.

Memberships to American Whitewater are \$35 per year. However, as a member of BWA you are eligible for an affiliate club membership fee of \$25 per year. In addition, BWA offers a limited number of free memberships to BWA members who have never been members of American Whitewater.

# BWA Club General Information

## BWA Website

The BWA website, <http://www.surfbwa.org> is the official source for information such as roll sessions, dates, special club events, meeting locations, news, membership applications, useful links, clinic applications, our *Bowlines* newsletter, and an added surprise from time to time.

## Monthly Meetings

The BWA gets together at 7:30 P.M. on the second Tuesday of each month. Updated information on meeting location is posted on our web page at: [http://www.surfbwa.org/html/meet\\_eatN.html](http://www.surfbwa.org/html/meet_eatN.html)

## Bowlines Newsletter



Bowlines, a bimonthly newsletter, contains up-to-date information about current and future events as well as boating related stories submitted by BWA members, factual, fictional, and mythical. Paddler magazine has said this about Bowlines: "Lexington Ky's Bluegrass Wildwater Association takes top honors for the design, content, entertainment, and usefulness of its Bowlines publication. If this were an online newsletter contest, the club would probably win that too—it went into cyberspace in 1996 and (is) posting each issue online for download." Please email articles you would like to submit to Bowlines to [donspang@aol.com](mailto:donspang@aol.com).

We have Bowlines Issues going back decades with interesting stories about river trips BWA members have taken, not only to streams in Kentucky and nearby states, but all over the US, and Canada, as well as trips and expeditions to South America, Nepal, China and many other international locations. Our Webmaster has promised that he will have older issues reposted to our website going back to 1991 coming soon!

**View Bowlines issues online at: <https://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/bowlines>**

***As a member is important that you share your adventures, stories, and photos with us in futures issues, just email them to the BWA Bowlines editor: [donspang@aol.com](mailto:donspang@aol.com)***

## Instruction & Activities

### **BWA Spring Beginner's Clinic & Other training/learning opportunities**

Officially kicking off the spring season, the Spring Beginner's Clinic, held every year is a great opportunity for beginning and intermediate boaters to get on the river and meet other members of the BWA. Instruction, gear, camping, and meals are included for one low price. Applications and other information can be found on the Web page. The Spring Beginner's Clinic fills up in advance every year so sign up early and tell your friends!

Also available, through the BWA, are training in Swift Water Rescue, Wilderness First Aid, and CPR. These training opportunities are offered on a limited basis and only when funding allows and volunteers are available.

### **National Paddling Film Festival**

Hosted by the BWA for over 20 years the National Paddling Film Festival (NPFF) takes place each February and offers amateurs and professionals alike the chance to screen their films and offers the local paddling community a chance to view the latest films, videos, and images submitted over the previous year. Also hosting workshops, competitions, and a silent auction for gear, the NPFF has received national attention and is, at the least, a great chance to shake the mid-winter blues and get excited for the coming boating season.

The NPFF is another opportunity to volunteer your time! So come on down and help the BWA make it happen.

## Russell Fork Rendezvous

A classic party in the fine BWA tradition, the Russell Fork Rendezvous is a multi-day gathering, festival, and downriver race celebrating the fabulous Russell Fork Gorge located in Breaks Interstate Park. The Russell Fork (and the Pound River flowing out of the Flanagan Dam) is a spectacular river with some of the most challenging water in the country as well as excellent beginner and intermediate sections. The Rendezvous is scheduled around annual fall releases from the dam, and the town of Haysi, W.V. is always happy to see boaters. In fact, it is the most welcoming town most of us have ever seen. The Russell Fork Rendezvous is another great opportunity to volunteer your kind energy for the cause. You have to be there to believe it.

## Club Parties & Reunions

Continuing the decades-long tradition, the BWA uses about any excuse to get together for a party. The Clinic, the NPF, and the Annual Reunion parties are just a few of the official excuses to get together and blow off some steam, but impromptu chili-cook offs, women's get-togethers, and just about any gathering of more than a handful of BWA'ers is reason enough for the party to start. Wanna get involved? Throw a party. These parties may or may not be announced; Stay in touch!

## Club Trips

Each year, generous members, out of the goodness of their hearts and to "pass on the tradition", volunteer to lead trips for beginners and intermediates alike. These trips go when and where the leaders choose but could include such locations as the Hiawasee, the Nantahala, the Ocoee, the Big South Fork, the New River, and the Lower Gauley. Usually informally announced during meetings or in the newsletter, these trips provide the opportunity for newer paddlers to continue to glean pearls of wisdom from more experienced paddlers, like where and when to go and what to do when you get there.

## Passing On The Tradition

'What's this club all about anyway?' -What do I get if I Join?'

These are but a couple of questions posed by people I talk to who are curious about our club. At first I am usually frustrated by anyone who would ask such elementary questions. The basic answer I feel is to pass on an ever growing tradition.

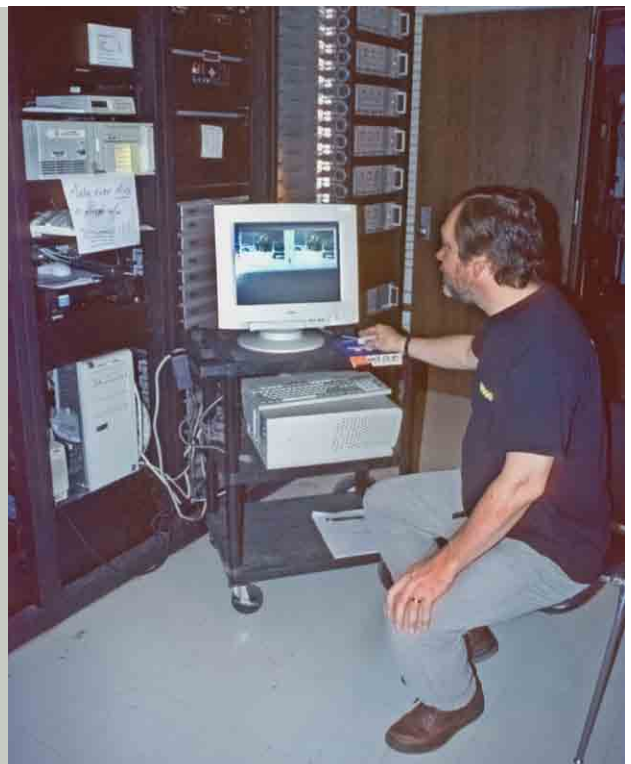
To be a good whitewater boater takes some skill that can be learned in a weekend, some practice at what you've learned, and then hooking up with a group of boaters who can pass on this tradition of river education.

This river education is best passed from one to the next, not by book or film. but by taking that novice and inviting him to go with you. Try to lead and help then all you can and encourage them when they do well.

This tradition of helping is what encouraged me in the sport. A few well placed phone calls, invites on trips. and finally someone taking me under their wing for a paddling season.

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

*Sam Moore*



There have been few BWA members over the club's history that have been more appreciated & respected than Sam Moore. His unselfish efforts in teaching others to build boats, explore & paddle rivers, bringing the BWA into the computer and internet age and other countless hours he devoted to the success of all of our efforts and our good times!. We all thank you Sam!!



# Nearby Places to go Whitewater Boating In and Around Central Kentucky

By Barry Grimes

Kentucky is not usually a state famous for its whitewater paddling, but it should be. Within a driving time radius of 20 minutes to 3 hours a whitewater boater will find everything from scenic class II to dramatic class V+. Here are some of the streams around Lexington, KY that are generally considered by the members of the BWA to be “day trips.” All of the streams listed are natural flow (with on exception) and are runnable year round after a good rain of about 1-inch in 24 hours. For more information, refer to Bluegrass Wildwater Association founding members Bob Sehlinger’s guidebook “A Canoeing and Kayaking Guide to the Streams of Kentucky” (<http://www.menasharidge.com/paddle.htm>) or visit the American Whitewater Web page and visit the Web links included with the descriptions below.

Note: Drive times are estimated from the center of Lexington.

## 20-Minute Drive

**Boone Creek (class II):** Named for the famous frontiersman and forms the border of Fayette and Clark Counties, Boone Creek is a stunningly beautiful class II stream. Flowing through a steep, narrow, and lush tree lined gorge this is a float for paddlers seeking serenity and multiple photo opportunities. Good boat control is a must for this run due to dangerous, sometimes stream-wide strainers that can frequently appear around blind, twisting turns. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/654/>

## 25-Minute Drive

**Jouett Creek (class III-IV+):** Parallel to Boone Creek in Clark County this is a short, newly discovered “slide ride” stream that offers the experienced paddler a steep quick drop into the Kentucky River. This is a creek that needs “flash flood” rains in order to be runnable. Similar to Boone in scenery it is also very prone to dangerous strainers that mandate expert boat control and strong safety measures. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2558/>

## 30-Minute Drive

**Elkhorn Creek (class II-III):** Located near Frankfort, KY the gorge section, which begins at the Forks of the Elkhorn Bridge, is the “home stream” for the BWA. Full of mostly class II rapids with the occasional class III hydraulic, the Elkhorn is a stream with plenty to satisfy the novice or experienced whitewater paddler. Lots of dynamic play spots and wide enough to stay free of strainers the Elkhorn has a large watershed allowing it to typically keep its water longer than other area streams. Fun and runnable from about 3 feet down to 6-inches (as measured by the Forks bridge gauge available from Canoe KY’s Web site at: <http://www.canoeky.com>) it’s the creek to paddle when the others have become too low. Watch out for the dangerous dam about 1 mile into the run and portage only on the left. (Note: This dam is a very difficult portage at gauge levels above 3-feet.) <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/661/>

**Glenns Creek (class II-III):** Running through Woodford Co. near Frankfort, Glenns is possibly the most playful stream in the north central KY area. Look for Glenns soon after a substantial rain when the Elkhorn is running over 3-feet. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2559/>

**East Fork (Prong) of Otter Creek (class III-IV):** The East Prong is the steepest of the three sections of Otter Creek in Madison County, KY near Fort Boonesboro State Park. Depending on the water level, the E. Prong can offer solid class IV rapids with numerous play spots. Short and sweet it’s a creek for more experienced paddlers and one that is often run in combination with other Madison Co. streams. Look here first after a good rain. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2534/>

**West Fork (Prong) of Otter Creek (class II-III):** This creek starts you surfing right away, and doesn’t let up! Numerous holes and waves provide plenty of surfing spots even for the largest of groups. The W. Prong tends to hold water longer than the E. Prong and joins up with the Main Otter about 3/4 mile from its start. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2505/>

**Main Stem of Otter Creek (class II-III):** With the largest water volume of the three Otters, the Main Stem may be broken into several different sections or run in its entirety. Continuing the non-stop surfing characteristics of its shorter tributaries it

tends to contain huge glassy green surfing waves when the Rain Gods have been bountiful. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2505/>

**Tates Creek (class II-III):** Running along the road, Tates is a favorite “everything else is too high” kinda creek. Similar in the limestone shelf drop character of most of Madison County’s streams it provides many surfing opportunities along its entire length. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2507/>

**Howard’s Creek (class II-III+):** Another Kentucky River drainage that provides outstanding surfing and interesting drops, infrequently paddled, however, due to the numerous strainers. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2557/>

#### **45-Minute Drive**

**Muddy Creek (class II-III):** Considered by many local paddlers to be the best play stream of Central Kentucky. Muddy is best run after a good rain of at least 1-inch in 24 hours. Littered with surfing holes and waves, Muddy Creek’s numerous rapids typically offer large whitewater paddling groups multiple play spots with no waiting in the eddies! Flowing near Union City, KY in Madison Co. south of Lexington, Muddy is often run along with the Otter Creek sections to give a “triple play day” for energetic boaters. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2506/>

**Benson Creek (class II-III):** Flowing into the Kentucky River at Frankfort, Benson Creek is a playboater’s heaven with lots of surfing opportunities, plenty of access, and a 15-foot runnable waterfall. Look for the Benson after a good rain when the Elkhorn is 2-foot.

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2681/>

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/653/>

#### **90-Minute Drive**

**Laurel River (class II-III (IV)):** Spectacular, short and tough to catch flowing at runnable levels the Laurel provides about 2 miles of fun rapids in very cold water. The put-in is just below the Laurel Lake Dam whose very unpredictable releases control the flows for this scenic stretch. Take-out is at the Laurel’s confluence with Lake Cumberland. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/3312/>

**Cumberland Below the Falls (class II-III):** Put-in at the beautiful (but usually not considered runnable) Cumberland Falls and paddle to Lake Cumberland and the mouth of the Laurel River. The fluctuating levels of the lake may cover the final set of rapids of this scenic run. With its huge watershed, the Cumberland typically has runnable levels year round but is best run in the winter months when the Lake is at winter pool and the (up to 5 mile) flatwater paddle to the take-out will be less. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/656/>

#### **2-3 Hour Drive**

**Russell Fork River (class II-III (IV); class V+; class II-III):** Located east of Lexington via the Mountain Parkway, on the KY/VA border, is the awesome Russell Fork River. Likely to be running year round this stream has three distinct sections that will delight any skill level. Be advised, however, that the Russell Fork through the Breaks Interstate Park or Gorge section is a solid class V+ stretch containing very difficult and steep world class rapids littered with deadly undercuts.

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2011/>

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2010/>

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/3113/>

**Big South Fork of the Cumberland (III-IV):** Formed at the confluence of the New and Clear Fork Rivers of Tennessee, the BSF of the Cumberland is truly a gem of a whitewater river. Near the town of Onieda, TN, off US 27, the river can be accessed at several points within the BSF National River and Recreation Area maintained by the National Park Service. Offering outstanding rapids and plenty of play opportunities, the BSF is well worth the drive and can easily be done in a day trip by an early rising group of paddlers. <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1719/>

**Caution! Always be aware that many factors may change things on any stream: water levels, strainers, temperatures. Make sure you do not get an unsuspected dangerous condition.**



A question a new boater will ask at some time.....

# When Did I Get Good Enough To Run Class III's?



*Terese on the Upper New in West Virginia*

Much to my surprise, I just recently found out that, hey, I can run class III rapids. Just when and how did that happen?

The leaders of this year's women's trip decided the Nolichucky was to be our destination. I knew the Nolichucky was a class II-III river with a couple of IV's thrown in for fun (at higher water levels). Our leaders assured me that at the low water levels predicted for the weekend, it would be no problem; and that the class III rapids could be walked (in fact Val graciously offered to run my boat through anything I did not want to run).

Up until this trip, my river experience has consisted mostly of: Elkhorn Creek, 2 BWA Clinics, the Upper New, recently the Upper Red River (at low water levels), Nantahala, one trip to Madawaska, and last year an entire 15 minutes on the Ocoee before I decided that was way too much for me. Supposedly, Nantahala Falls is a class III rapid, but I've never really thought of it as a class III rapid since it's pretty much a straight shot. Considering that there were still a couple of rapids on the Elkhorn that give me quite a bit of trouble, I've always considered my skill level to be at class II-II+ at best, so the idea of running the Nolichucky was making me more than just a bit nervous.

So, on Saturday morning, with much hesitation, I set off with our group to run the Nolichucky. Entrance Rapid.

No sooner did I get into this rapid, I was hit by a wave from the left and almost flipped over to my offside. Somehow (Prince thought it was great brace, I thought it was mainly luck) I managed to come through the first rapid upright, although my boat was full of water, and my confidence badly shaken. My thoughts as I negotiated into an eddy to empty my boat were “I can’t do this. There is no way I’m ready to run a class III river,” and “I hope they are right about being able to walk these rapids.”

At the second rapid, On the Rocks, I got out, along with a few others, to scout the rapid. At first this rapid didn’t look too bad, until I saw the line others were taking. Just Great! In the middle of the rapid, not only a drop, but a very sharp, very tight, right turn down through the chute. Right turns are definitely not my strong suit, even on smaller water. I thought there was no way I could make that turn without getting into trouble, especially after watching Bill (yes some of the guys managed to tag along on the women’s trip) run the drop upside down in his C-1. Right turns are to Bill’s strong side. If he wasn’t able to make that, I figured there wasn’t much hope for me; so I started scouting portage possibilities. As I watched the next kayak run through, I noticed the water slowed the kayak down right before that right turn. And then, I saw a possible route to the left that no one else was taking. Was I reading the water correctly? Was there really a route that way, or was there something in there I just wasn’t seeing. Val confirmed that, yes, it might be possible to run to the left, but warned me that I would have to break left across the wave to make it, which might not be easy to do. Left. Shouldn’t be too much of a problem. Left is definitely my strong side, so I decided to take a chance and run the rapid. Success and very little water in my boat, no flips, no wobbles. On to the next rapid.

Finally, we came the end of the class III section. I had to ask, multiple times, “those were all class III rapids?”. “Yes.” “Really?!! Even at this low water level? Those were really class III rapids?” “Yes. Yes, they really were class III rapids,” I was told again. Wow! No swims, no pins, picked pretty good lines, felt in control most of the time. Just when, or maybe more importantly, how, did I get good enough to be able to run class III rapids I wondered?

After much thought during the drive home, the best answer I could come up with was: practice, practice and more practice. I have spent much of the past two years practicing individual skills such as eddy turns, ferries, peel outs, surfing, etc., and learning to read the water. I had also been given some great advice I have been trying to follow: practice class III moves on class II water. I’m sure to some, it looked pretty boring, trying to surf and ferry and eddy turn in really tiny waves or really slow current. But I realized it was those small waves & slow current where I began to learn how my boat reacted to the water, how shifting my weight affects how the boat moves, and eventually I started moving up to practice on bigger waves and faster currents. Also, this past year I started practicing back ferries. Now I really wasn’t sure when or why I would ever need to use a back ferry, but since they went to the trouble of trying to teach us back ferries at Madawaska, I thought they must come in handy somewhere. Well, at one point on my Nolichucky run, it may have been in quarter mile rapid, I eddied out behind a rock Dave Merrifield was standing on. “Nice back ferry up there”, he said as I pulled up. “Back ferry?! I did a back ferry? Huh, how about that?” I responded. And here I thought I was just adding a couple of quick back paddles to straighten out the front of my boat before going down through the next shoot. Well, I guess now I know what one of those times are when back ferries are handy.

It seems, practicing all these individual skills has paid off. And on this particular trip all those individual skills came together and I was able to use those skills together in various combinations to successfully navigate my way through the rapids. And since I have practiced these skills over, and over, and over again, they are starting to come to me almost as second nature, I didn’t have to think quite so hard about what combination of strokes I needed to get past a particular rock and then into that next eddy, it just sort of happened.

So, back to my original question, just when, and how, did I get good enough to run a class III river? Apparently, I have been working up to it all along during the past year or so, but just wasn’t quite able to see that I was there yet. But what a rush when it did all come together, and this was by far, one of my best days ever on a river!

*Terese Pierskalla/Bowlines 2000*

**How about telling your early paddling story?** Send to Bowlines Editor: [donspang@aol.com](mailto:donspang@aol.com)



# Who owns the rivers in Kentucky?



Rich Lewis

**Rich Lewis**

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 lands 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 pub-

lic 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 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>.  
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## Reflections from a new member:

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

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

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

Wayne Catron, Bowlines, May/June1980  
Wayne Catron, Bowlines, May/June1980

---- Contributed by Wayne Catron

Editors Note: Wayne has just recently taken a job with eastman Kodak as a chemical engineer and has moved to Kingsport, Tennessee.

Bowlines May/june 1980

## Editor's Eddy: River Etiquette

The longer one paddles. the more etiquette one acquires in his or her river running behavior. Several rules of paddle emerge as necessary to the safety and well-being of club trips. These rules, in brief, may be interpreted as follows:

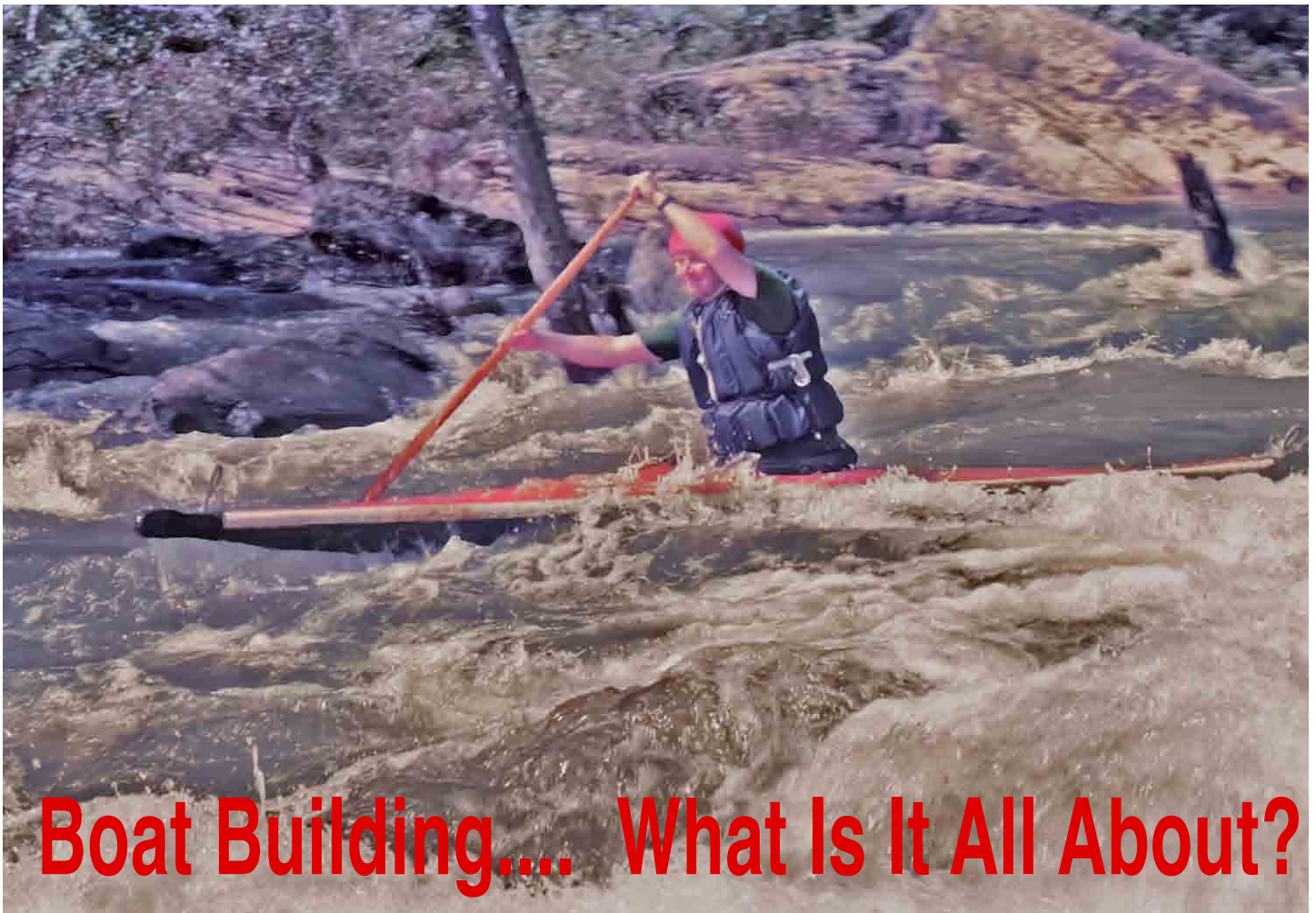
1. The person in the current has right-of-way over those sitting in eddies.
2. The person playing at the bottom of the drop has the right of way over someone yet to enter the drop. In other words, do not enter a rapid unless you know you can eddy out before reaching the bottom where the other person is playing.
3. Always keep sight of the person in front of and behind you, but maintain a respectable distance in rapids.
4. Wait for swimmers to empty their boats before moving on down-stream.
5. Don't run a steep drop until you can see the person in front of you exit it. This is particularly important if the person in front spells has name Don.
6. In most cases. rescue paddlers first. Equipment can be re-placed.
7. If you find yourself swimming, hold onto your paddle and boat. It makes rescue much easier.
8. Don't litter. EVER. Always do your part to pick it up when you can!
9. Help load and off load boats. Those who drive frequently are tired of this job. let's help them out.

These rules are my own perception of proper river etiquette and are what I observe the best paddlers doing in practice rather than theory. Revisions or additions to the above list are welcome.

Rich Lewis

Bowlines October 1980





## Boat Building.... What Is It All About?

*Don Spangler paddling the Slipper C-1 he made in the late seventies on Elkhorn Creek.*

*Nowadays most paddlers never give a thought to making their own boat. In the early days of the BWA roto molding plastic boats did not exist. Ready made whitewater fiberglass canoes and kayaks were expensive (to us) and limited in the designs we could buy. So some of us in the BWA made our own fiberglass composite or cedar-strip boats. They served us well on trips to the New, Gauley and other technical streams as well as on Multiday trips on the Seway and other Western rivers. Some still exist in garages, but prosperity & technology has moved on. Many of the boat manufacturers you buy from now started by building their own boats in the seventies and eighties. Here is my story of making boats from the early days of the BWA.*

Unless you are new to the sport of paddling, you probably have had some contact with a person that has built a boat, from a mold, kit (partially completed boat) or at least had made some repairs or modifications of a boat. Sooner or later the serious paddler will do some kind of fiberglass work. To some it is just an inconvenience; to some it becomes a means to an end to have a better, less expensive boat. Over the years, I have done a great deal of repair work on boats; mostly my own, alas. It can be a pain if you are in a rush to get ready for a weekend of paddling. But you soon learn the proper techniques, as well as some shortcuts after a few patches fall off or don't harden or you end up with a stiff t-shirt and have to get an early short haircut because of resin in your hair. But once you are successful there is that happy, confident feeling that your boat won't leak and sink on you this trip. Perhaps, because of some of these memories, I hesitated building a boat for some time or was it risking the money or was it the weight of my old boat, heavy with repairs that was getting to me? Well, whatever it was, I took the plunge and built one this fall. I have no regrets.

The end product, while not cosmetically perfect, turned out to be far superior to many "factory" boats I have seen. The task was demanding, but not as much as one might think. The keys are 1) proper preparation and materials and 2) several good friends. Let me give my thanks to the able help of Sam Moore, John Lovett, Charles Andre, Terry Weeks and Mickey Fulp who all at one time or other were most helpful when I built my first C-1.

There are a couple of good starting points if you think you might be interested in making your next boat. First pick up a copy of "Boat Builders Manual" by Charles Walbridge and Steve Rock. It has a wealth of information and is a must reading if you are going to make your own boat.. It contains detailed info on resin systems, lay-ups, materials, molds, techniques and very important: safety. Always keep safety in mind when you are working with chemicals, even for a minor patch job.

The second thing to do is to work with some experienced people on a boat or two before starting your own. This will give invaluable insight. This is really important since there can be almost infinite variations in how a boat is laid up. Should you use a Polyester or vinylester resin? Epoxy resin? E-glass or S-glass? Kevlar? Nylon? What combination of fabrics is best for the hull? In what order do they work best? What design would be the best for you? High or low volume? It is only with some research and experience that you can best answer these questions.

Lets say you have decided on a kayak or C-1, what next? First, you have to locate a boat mold of a design you like. Our club has access to a few but you may have to rent one or perhaps even make one. Next you consider the materials and their cost. Cost will run \$150 to \$300 on the average. depending on the type of fabric and resin You use. I have found that it is well worth spending a few extra bucks to get not only a better boat but you will also find better materials are much easier to work with.

Once you have determined the materials and obtain them, the next critical step is preparation. Find a good place to work. It should be well ventilated, heated if you plan to work in cold weather (so the resin will set up properly) and have enough space for the mold and 3-5 people to work easily. Next, prepare the fabric and materials, have a pattern for cutting the fabric to the style you desire. Good shears are very important. If you have never cut a piece of Kevlar, you are in for a real treat. Each layer of fabric should be rolled up to prevent edges from fraying and label them.

Now its time to prepare the mold. Make and repairs that may be needed. Wax the inside and treat it with a releasing agent just before the work begins. The next step is the lay-up. This is a critical time that must run smoothly and efficiently. It is best to have one person prepare the resin and do miscellaneous jobs while others lay the fabric in the mold and saturate it with the resin. Each layer of cloth is added one after the other. With 4 people helping it takes about 3-4 hours to do half of the boat.

After both halves are laid up, the next task is to pop them from the mold and trim the excess material in preparation for seaming. Seaming is probably the most distasteful part of the job. The boat must be turned on its side while you seam it on the inside with at least two layers of fiberglass tape. This means you have to be partly inside the boat to do this. A good chemical mask is a must because of the strong fumes from the resin. once the inside is done. you have the relatively easy job of seaming the outside.

The final phase is outfitting the boats installing a cockpit rim, a seat and the necessary rigging to get it ready to paddle: foot braces if it is a kayak and straps or machines if it is a C-1 as well as walls and grab-loops in both cases.

A lot of work, yes, but believe me it can be worth it. You can have a boat that is better than most you can buy for at least half the cost. In the process you will have learned a lot about boat design that will help you understand why your boat reacts the way it does in moving water. Not only that, but there is a certain pride to be had when you are able to point at your boat and say "Yep, that's my boat, made it myself. Its a beaut, isn't it?"

*Don Spangler  
Bowlines December 1980*



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