Happy 20th Birthday GCA! Yes, it's true. The GCA is this year celebrating its 20th year of continuous community service. In celebration of this gala occasion, we have designed a beautiful four color commemorative embroidered emblem (pictured here in not so beautiful black and white) which is now available to our members. They look great on life jackets, paddling jackets, hats or just about any other place you can think of.

Don't be left out. This is an offer that will not be repeated. To order yours send $4.00 for each emblem and a self addressed, stamped envelope to:

Andy Warshaw
8334 Willows Terrace
Riverdale, Ga. 30274

Or, better still, come pick one up at the next executive board meeting. It's a collectors item you won't want to miss. Order yours today.

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P.O. BOX 7023
ATLANTA, GA 30357

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TIME LIMIT

MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

The EDDY LINE

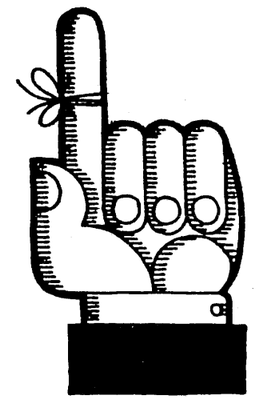
POST OFFICE BOX 7023 • ATLANTA, GA 30357 Vol. 21 No. 12 December, 1986

DEADLINE for the next newsletter is the 15th. Send material to Gary DeBacher, CRM, 1441 Clifton Rd, Atlanta, GA 30322. Please type border- to-border (zero margins) with indented paragraphs, and don't skip a line between paragraphs. This saves valuable space. Good, high quality photos, cartoons, artwork, and clippings of general interest to the paddling community are also welcome.

ADDRESS CHANGES, SUBSCRIPTION PROBLEMS AND MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES: send to GCA, PO Box 7023, Atlanta, GA 30357, attn. membership chairperson.

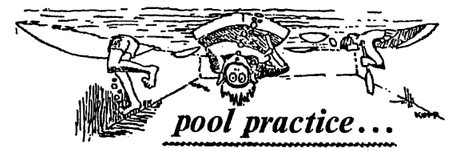
NEXT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING WILL BE THE FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:30 PM, at the Ida Williams Branch Library, 269 Buckhead Ave NE, Atlanta (near the intersection of Roswell, Peachtree & Paces Ferry Rds). Members and interested persons are invited to attend. If you wish to submit any matters for discussion or vote, call the president (Andy Warshaw, 478-2104) so he can plan time on the agenda.

Dec. 6	Exploration waterfall hike		Carol Mercer	373-6683
	Exploration wild card	class 1-2	Roger Nott	1-536-6923
	Upper Hooch	class 2-3	Dave Bowman	923-0954
	Chattooga 3	class 3-4, advanced	Jim Silavent	587-1172
7	Chattooga 2	class 1-2	Jimmy Gunter (W)	993-9377
	Upper Amicalola	class 2-3, intermediate	Laura Jordon	233-7294
	Sweetwater Creek	3++, advanced	Jerry Holladay	688-1842
13	Cartecay	2-3, intermediate	Dennis Crain	633-6487
	Chattooga 4	class 3-5,expert	Allen Hedden	252-6167
14	Upper Hooch	2-3, intermediate	Louis Jacobs	633-3452
	Wild Card	3-4, advanced	Andy Warshaw	478-2104
19-20-21	Cumberland Island Camping		Carol Mercer	478-2104
20	Broad	1-2, trained beginner	Jeff Engel	404-548-5015
	Nantahala	2-3, intermediate	Bruce Bishop	641-1944
	Wild Card	3-5, expert	Peter Elkon	373-7535
21	Chattooga 2	1-2, trained beginner	trip leader needed	587-1172
	Cartecay	2-3, intermediate	Cary Vandiver	1-635-7501
27	Upper Hooch	2-3, intermediate	Jim McCay	1-789-2479
	Nantahala	2-3, intermediate	Jerry Peterman	395-9495
28	Upper Amicalola	2-3, intermediate	Rob Kerr	498-6791
Jan. 1	Wild Card Hike or Paddle		Laura Jordon	233-7294
3	Broad	1-2, trained beginner	Jim McCay	1-789-2479
	Wild Card	2-3	Dewey Tate	487-2111
	Chattooga 3	3-4, advanced	David Tillis	751-1517
4	Upper Hooch	2-3, intermediate	Jay Kessler	843-1642
	Wild Card	3+, advanced	John Pinyerd	993-3678



A Reminder — Dues are Due!

ROLLING PRACTICE will be held at 7 PM on Monday nights beginning December 1 at the Whitehead Boys Club. To get there, take I-75 to the Lakewood Fairgrounds exit, hwy 166, and go east a block or so until it dead ends. Turn left and go to the 2nd traffic light. The Boys Club will be on your right. There will be a $3 per person charge. MAKE SURE YOUR BOAT IS CLEAN, and the rest of you too.



EXECUTIVE BOARD CHANGES MEETING PLACE.....Beginning with the January regular meeting, the Executive Board will meet at the Atlanta Jewish Community Center at 1745 Peachtree Rd., NE, Atlanta. Meetings will continue to be held on the FIRST THURSDAY of the month at 7:30 P.M. (Since the first Thursday in January is New Years Day, January's meeting will be postponed until the second Thursday, Jan. 8) As in the past, all interested members are welcome to attend these regular business meetings. The Center seems more than willing to offer us a permanent meeting place. With this cordial offer and their central location, we hope to be with them for a long time. Entrance to the building should be from the rear where there is a large well lit parking lot. We will meet upstairs in Room #35. A map is enclosed for your convenience. Our December meeting is still scheduled for Thurs., Dec. 4 at the Ida Williams Branch Library.

PRESIDENT WARSHAW APPOINTS COMMITTEE HEADS President Andy Warshaw has established the following committees for 1987. As the respective chairmen he chose the below named energetic club members. These individuals plus the officers and directors, elected by the membership, comprise the Executive Board of the GCA.

The Executive Board sets the policies, does the planning and a lot of the work. Your aid is critical to completing the work and to the smooth running of an active club. When called by these leaders to help the club, lend a hand and enjoy the experience, say YES.

ACA Representative	Oreon Mann	Publicity	Brad Nichol
Advertising	Barry Hahn	Racemaster	Don George
Athens Affiliate Liaison	Jeff Engel	Assistant Racemaster	John Pinyerd
Directory Editor	Mark Levine	Race Registrar	Jeanne Peters
Environmental Affairs	Evelyn Hopkins	Assistant Race Registrar	Bruce Bishop
Exploration	Ben Maxwell	River Rights	Jerry Holladay
Historian	Gwen Bergen	Safety	Wayne Gentry
Impromptu Trip Leader	Rob Kerr	Social/GALA	Laura Jordon
Membership	Carol Mercer		

ETOWAH REVISITED Saturday, November 8. The long, drought-plagued spring and summer offered little chance to travel down the falls section of this beautiful stream. On this foggy, fall morning paddlers in 8 canoes and 1 kayak found enough CFS to carry them for a last view this year of the color splashed hills hemming in the valley. The mists soon cleared the treetops then the hilltops. Precisely at noon, at lunch, at the falls, the sun burned through the scud and lifted our spirits. We needed that. For earlier we had seen new surveyor's stakes and orange streamers subdividing the flood plain on river left. The plots begin just below Chuck Shoals and run about two-thirds of the way to the falls. Too soon we'll see cabins, mobile homes and dog houses replacing the interwoven rhododendrons, pines and hemlocks that grace the slopes and floor of the valley. Riverside lots are the new treasure in this played out gold mining region. The sightseers on this cruise: OC-2's, Sylvia and Ron Kriest, Jane and Royce Hughes; K-1, David Plumley; OC-1's, Nancy Barker, John Bell, Barry Hahn, Walter Howard, Gary Plumley and trip leader, Ed Schultz.

WELCOME ABOARD ALL YOU NEW GCA MEMBERS. THE FOLLOWING HAVE JOINED SINCE AUG/SEPT 1986. SEE YOU ON THE RIVERS NOW THAT THERE IS SOME WATER.

Paul and Lisa Aland	Melissa Attaway	Martin Bay
Marcia Barry	Gayle Cahill	Laura Davidson
Jydon Davis	Steve Davis	Thomas, James,Lee &Glenn Davis
Nell Dopson	Molly Eaton	Laurie Ehrlich
Eileen Ellis	Alice,Brock,Steve Farist	James Folds
Margie&Mike Gilmore	Frank Goulding	Al Handley
William Hanson	J.B.Hawking Jr	Steve Holenstein
Ginger Kenny	Bill,Patti Locke	John,Mary,Richard,EricaMorgan
Thomas McCarty	Jerry,Debbie McClanahan	Clay Nash
Wayne,Karen Norman	Gerry Palmer	Jim Palmour
Lisa Shone	Fred Smith & family	Libby Smith
Myles Smith	Ortrude White	William Stephens
Anne Shenk	Al,Cindy Sheppard	Rodney Stevens
Leigh Trocine	Harriet,Dan,Ethan,Keri,	Erin Wall
Donald Wigston	Ronald Williams	Patrick Wolfer

Want to run a river for the first time? Need someone to show the way? Call the G.C.A. Right? Wrong! I've gotten the distinct feeling that if you are new to a river you aren't wanted. Every time I call about a trip, as soon as I say that I haven't ever run the river before, I might as well forget it. I rarely get the chance to give previous experience and type of equipment used. The last excuse was so lame I decided to write this letter. "Winter conditions" was the excuse. The so called "winter conditions" kept me in shorts all weekend long - day and night. My first trip this season was in February, but I wasn't asked. Thirty river trips so far this year, 22 on the Ocoee, but I was not asked. Granted I've picked difficult rivers but the reason I joined the G.C.A. was to run difficult rivers with supposedly knowledgeable and safety-conscious people. I know the risks associated with river running and accept them - it's a solo sport. If you don't want first-timers on the trip, please state so on the news letter so I don't waste long distance calls. I could go on but I hope that I've said enough to make some trip leaders rethink their attitudes towards first-timers on any given river. If there is a next time, I might ask them how many times they have run the river, can they roll their boat and do they swim often?

Thank you, Tom Johnston

CHATTOOGA, Sect. IV - November 8

This is going to be a little different trip report, but first the basics. Despite a heavy overcast sky and early rain, it was a delightful day on the river - with lingering leaf color and a water level of 1.46.

This being my first time as trip leader on Sect. 4, I was amazed to find paddlers who had achieved that skill level, but carried no throw rope or throw bag. I firmly believe that every person paddling Sect. 4 (and probably Sect. 3 also) should have a throw bag along and know how to use it. An unexpected emergency of many sorts could demand its immediate use, with no time to wait on a boat with a rope. You may choose to make some compromises with personal safety (and most of us do at some time or other), but there should be no compromise with group safety. I intend to insist on this in the future, and hope other trip leaders will also.

There also seems to be some tendency toward a fragmented group. Every person has an obligation to every other paddler on the trip, not just the person or small group he came with. I will risk my life to save yours, and bust a gut to rescue your equipment - and I expect you to do the same for every other person on the trip. Whether you have known him for years or just met him that morning makes no difference. If you don't feel the same way, I'd rather not paddle with you.

If the shoe fits, wear it. Your old curmudgeon and trip leader, Bob Striggow.

P.S.- No, we had no unusually bad incidents - but any trip might.

Upper Hooch Sun Oct 17, 1986 trip leader: Carol Mercer Water level 1.4ft
A fun, quiet run, no spills, only warm, sunny, picture perfect fall weather. All you folk who cancelled because of the rain missed a great trip. water was a bit low, but none of us had trouble(either we are darn good, or the rocks were asleep). The trip leader showed the group how to roll a sunburst in about 6-8inches of water, and bring it up with a rock brace and the help of the other canoeist who helped put it there to begin with. We also saw a blue heron and a hawk . Our paddlers were: OC-1:Gerard Abersen, Walter Howard, Dick Butterworth, John Kruegel, Ted Maloof and yours truly. OC-2: Vic and Gabe Maloof. Three Cheers to our tandem team and to Stan Landers for running shuttle.

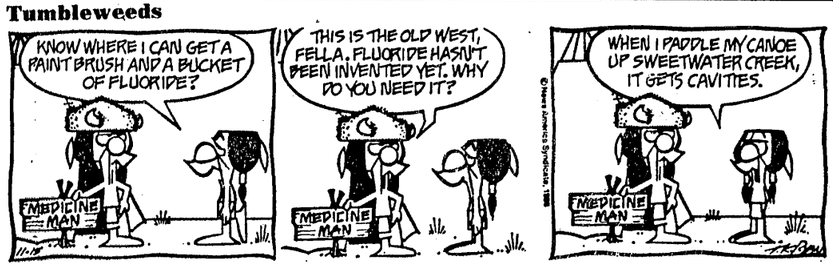
November 9,1986 Ocoee River @ 650 cfs

Although the Ocoee River was supposed to be turned off for the winter, we had heard from Alan Hedden and Wayne Gentry that it had been running about 700 cfs the weekend of Nov. 2. (Normal recreational release is 1200 cfs). Alan reported that they had run both the upper and lower sections. He described the upper as scrapey and the lower as very technical.

Our little group began assembling in the rain about 11:30. The water in the upper section was low. A gate had been dropped in the dam next to the flume and silty water was being passed through from the upper section to the lower. The routes through Entrance Rapid and Broken Nose appeared to have clearances of 6" and we had no way of judging the pushiness. Gonzo Shoals looked tricky because of the shallow water. The upper hole at Double Trouble kept a piece of styrofoam for a long time and there was no convenient put-in. By the time we had finished scouting and lunch it was 1:30 and the weather was clearing. Oreon Mann, Dave Tillis, and I put on at Flipper where John Bell and Kathy Kuyper from Duke U. had been practicing enders. David got a beauty, flipping all the way over in an end to end somersault. I discovered that I had forgotten how to roll and that the river was so full of silt there was no place and little inclination to practice.

Table Saw was interesting. Dave found an eddy-hopping route to the right of the saw which worked for all of us and was fun. Diamond Splitter was easy and Witch's Hole not as grabby as usual. There wasn't much room left of Hell Hole, so we all ran at least the edge of it. The usual play waves were missing at Powerhouse, but there was some action up in the rapid. Although we had run a pretty cautious route since none of us had seen the river at this level before, we all enjoyed our "bonus" day on the Ocoee. Evelyn Hopkins

Tumbleweeds



"Everyone must believe in something.

I believe I'll go canoeing."

— Henry David Thoreau —

Ohiopyle State Park is a great family recreation area. The park campground has 223 campsites, flush toilets and hot showers. I don't have the campground number, but if you want to reserve a site, you can call (412) 329-8591 or write to Ohiopyle State Park, P.O. Box 105, Ohiopyle PA 15470. You can family-float the class 1-2 middle Yock from Confluence to Ohiopyle, or you can bicycle, hike or jog along a paved trail on the south bank. There are miles of good trails along the river, up creeks like Meadow Run and Cucumber Run, around the Ferncliff Natural area (the peninsula enclosed by the Loop), and up higher ground to overlooks with panoramic views of the Youghiogheny gorge. While at the park, you have a good chance of hooking up with others for an intermediate run on the Casselman or an expert run on the Upper Yock. The Tygart and Cheat are not far to the south.

I wouldn't want to drive all that way just to paddle the Yock, or even the New, but with a little planning, one can manage to paddle a different river each day at a cost of just four or five hours of driving. May you have as much luck with water levels as I did. ---Gary DeBacher

UPDATE ON OCOEE RIVER POWERHOUSE TO BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

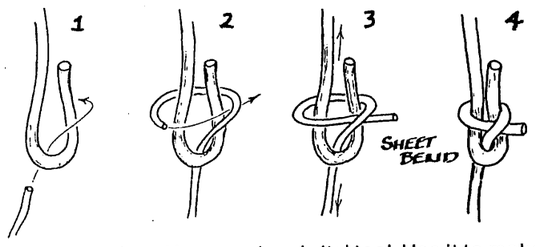
Ocoee River users have noticed the beginning of construction of the new single-span bridge connecting Highway 64 to Powerhouse 2. The new bridge will replace the old multispan bridge that has a hazardous piling in the middle of the river. We are pleased with the speed at which TVA has responded to remove this hazard from the river. It is hoped that construction will be completed by the spring of 1987.

Many paddlers have observed that one of the new bridge pilings is located on river-right, next to Hell's Hole near the powerhouse, probably the biggest surfing wave on the river. This construction has resulted in a number of large sharp rocks having fallen, or been pushed, into the river adjacent to the hole and just downstream of the hole into the eddy on the right. A number of paddlers have observed that this may be introducing a new hazard, as well as impacting the quality of one of the best play holes on the river. The river-right eddy just downstream of Hell's Hole has almost disappeared.

Mark Mobley is one paddler who has voiced concern about this situation. As a paddler and a TVA engineer, Mark was able to make the right contacts at TVA to rectify any inadvertent, but ironic, introduction of safety or quality problems at the new construction site. Mark indicated that TVA officials are willing to have any hazardous rock or river quality obstructions removed from the construction site while the construction crew is still in the area. A TVA construction drawing note shows a written commitment to "remove anything of consequence below the normal (3000 cfs) river level." This is good news and an indication that TVA officials are genuinely concerned with doing a good job. Thanks, Mark, for your help and for keeping us informed.

WHY KNOT?

Strictly speaking a sheet bend is not a knot. Nor is two half hitches. They are just what they claim to be, i.e. a bend and a hitch respectively. The bowline, however, is a knot. There is some logic in this taxonomy. A bend is used to fasten two rope ends together. A hitch is used to fasten a rope to some object. And a knot, strictly speaking, is a self-contained thing, as when a bowline is used to make a fixed loop. But there is no consistency in the terminology. Knots is a general label. There are dozens of weaver's knots, all of which are in fact bends. The water knot, known to climbers as the sling knot is one of the very best of bends. The square knot is a knot but is very frequently and inappropriately used as a bend. The fisherman's bend is really an anchor hitch. And everyone is aware that the topsail halyard bend is really a yard hitch. Speaking strictly of knot terminology is a little like running the Rock Garden on a dark night. You're gonna broach.

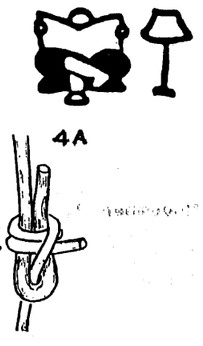


A sheet bend is a good and vital tool. Use it to make two short lines into one long one, or three pieces into an even longer assembly. It's plenty strong enough. If you are one of those people who refuses to cut up your 45 meter long rope for fear of someday maybe needing a long rope, this is your knot. Rather, bend. Simplify your life. Learn this bend, cut that rope into some handy, shorter lengths, and you are sure to spend significantly less time at put-in and take-out weaving ABS ensnaring webs. When you finally need that long line just pull out your sheet bend and reassemble the thing. You can have it both ways. Well, almost. It will pass a carabiner but not happily. Under tension through a carabiner is marginal and risks capsizing the bend. Better to use a double sheet bend in such case. It can be used to join different section size lines, but be sure the sizes are arranged as illustrated. Also, it is possible to tie a "left handed" sheet bend. The "right handed" and stronger version is illustrated. In the "left handed" version the two running ends come out on opposite sides. Not so strong. There is another simple variation on the basic tie which makes it more secure in a towing/lining situation. Some other time. . . .

Finally, a little puzzle. Get yourself three pieces of rope. Tie a bowline in the end of one. Tie the other two together with the sheet bend. Now, hold the two together, side by side and observe. What do you see?

—Bart Lee

TSRA NEWS



FOR SALE: Famous River Machine Kayak, Keylar layup with float bags and etha-foam walls. In excellent condition and weighs only 24 pounds. New cost is $950, asking only $400. Call Hank Klausman at 955-0553.

American Rivers Conservation Council

American Rivers Urges Forest Service Action

by Mary Wagner

American Rivers has found that many national forests are not fulfilling their responsibilities to the nation's rivers as forest plans are developed and carried out. Potential candidates for the National Wild and Scenic River System flow through nearly every national forest in America. Responsibility for evaluating these streams and recommending them for inclusion in the national system falls on the U.S. Forest Service, as part of the Land and Resource Management planning process.

The Kings in California, the Cranberry in West Virginia and the Blackwater in Alabama are among those rivers which are not receiving adequate consideration in the national forest planning, which is now underway. This conclusion is a result of a review of national forest plans conducted by American Rivers and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.

The findings led American Rivers Vice President and Conservation Director Chris Brown to write to the Chief of the Forest Service concerning the treatment of rivers in forest plan:

> The widespread defects and inconsistencies in the treatment of National Rivers Inventory rivers in the forest planning process demonstrate that further administrative direction from your office is urgently required to ensure that the Service's obligations under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act are fully carried out.

Brown also strongly recommended that the Chief:

> issue, as soon as possible, a clear and comprehensive explanation of the process which the Forest Supervisors and Regional Foresters could follow in considering rivers for potential inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Rivers in Forests Planning Process

National forest planning is, admittedly, an enormous project. A planning team on each forest must assess forest resources, develop alternatives for managing those resources in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and then present the chosen alternative in a Land and Resource Management Plan.

The Forest Service has been directed to evaluate all rivers listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI) that flow through a national forest and determine as part of the forest plan whether the river is eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. Forest Service policy is straightforward in its direction for consideration of candidate rivers.

Each forest plan must determine the eligibility of each NRI river within its boundaries. If the river is eligible, the plan must classify the river in the highest possible category (wild, scenic or recreational). Then, the planners may either determine the "suitability" of the river for wild and scenic protection, or defer a suitability study while protecting the river to maintain its eligibility and classification. If a river is declared eligible and suitable, the Forest Service must recommend it to Congress for designation as a Wild and Scenic River.

American Rivers research revealed serious deficiencies in the treatment of rivers in forest plans, including:

1. Failure to mention NRI rivers within the boundaries of the forest, such as in the Florida National Forest Plan.
2. Failure to make the required eligibility determination, such as in the Mark Twain National Forest Plan.
3. Inadequate documentation supporting declarations of ineligibility or unsuitability, such as in the Alabama National Forest Plan.
4. Failure to sufficiently protect eligible rivers in the interim before a suitability study is conducted, such as in the White Mountain National Forest Plan.
5. Failure to recommend to Congress for Wild and Scenic designation those rivers declared eligible and suitable, such as in the Wenatchee National Forest Plan.

American Rivers and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund have filed appeals on four final national forest plans concerning their treatment of rivers, and plan to meet with Chief Peterson of the Forest Service to discuss possible direction.

American Rivers has developed an information packet entitled "Rivers in Forests" to assist citizens, groups and state and local governments review forest plans. Contact Chris Brown at (202) 547-6900 to obtain a packet.

Tax Laws Ripe for Major Gifts to American Rivers

Because of anticipated changes in the income tax code, now may be the best time to make a major contribution to American Rivers. If you're currently in the 50% tax bracket, a gift of, say, $10,000 "costs" you only $5,000, because the other $5000 would otherwise have gone to Uncle Sam.

When the new laws take effect, possibly as early as next year, the top bracket will likely drop to around 28%. In other words, Uncle Sam would be underwriting only $2,800 of your $10,000 contribution.

If you've been thinking of making a large gift to American Rivers—in four, five, or even six figures—1986 may be the year to do it. Remember, you can contribute in cash, stocks, real estate, or personal property. We'd be glad to tell you how to go about it.

A major charitable gift to American Rivers can give you, the donor, great satisfaction. It's a way of insuring that a modest number of rivers will flow freely, to be enjoyed by you and those who will follow you on this beautiful planet.

American Rivers Conservation Council
801 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Suite 303
Washington, DC 20003

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First Annual

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Short trip (2 miles)
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taking out at Stegall Mill.
A bowl of steaming hot chili
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EDITOR'S GREAT WESTERN EASTERN WHITEWATER JAUNT.
PART II-- THE YOUGHIOGHENY

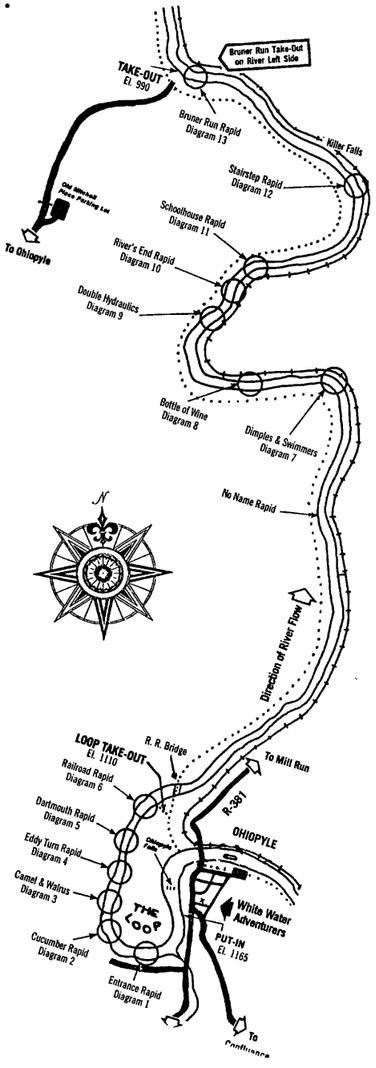
By 5:15 on this August Sunday I was loaded and driving across the New on hwy 19, headed for Ohiopyle, PA and the Yock. I passed the Meadow River, unrunnably low in August, and Summerville Reservoir, source for the lower Gauley. Word had it that there might be a Gauley release on Tuesday, to help flush out the Kanawah, but with my .500 rolling average, I would let the Gauley alone. What about the Cheat? The run from Albright had 38 rapids of class 3 or more in 11 miles. But unlike the New, it had no reservoir upstream. I ran into a couple of Pittsburgh kayakers at McDonalds, and they assured me that if the Cheat were high enough to run, they would be coming from there instead of from the New. On to the Yock, which is stabilized by upstream reservoirs.

It was about 10:30 when I rolled into Ohiopyle, and I just made it into the state park campground before they closed the gate at 11. It always seems kind of silly to pay 6 bucks to sleep in the car, but Ohiopyle had a rather manicured atmosphere about it which suggested that crashing just anywhere could get me arrested for vagrancy.

Next morning I found my food supply was moldy, so it was down to Ohiopyle for some breakfast, a quick tour of the riverbank and a slow spell waiting for an outfitting store to open so I could buy some neoprene cement. It seems I had picked up a three inch tear in my sprayskirt, probably from frantically tearing it open wet-exiting below Double Z. By 9:30 a knowledgable young paddler-type opened the shop, sold me some cement, and gave me some scrap neoprene to back the tear.

While waiting for the cement to dry, I scanned the parking lots, hoping to spot a group to join. Selection was real limited for a river with a reputation for impossible crowds. The few kayakers in sight were apparently running safety for commercial rafting outfits, or getting ready to practice in wildwater racing boats. One small group more nearly my own age had a short kayak, a Whitesell Piranha, a blocked Tripper and a custom boat trailer suggesting far-flung travels on many rivers. I made my usual deferential approach, citing my unfamiliarity with the river and desire to hook up with a knowledgable group, etc., while trying to assess their own level of experience. Charly the kayaker, a fit-looking fiftyish steel-worker from Ohio, had paddled the Yock many times and was functioning as unofficial tripleader. The other two were a lawyer and an emergency room surgeon, so if I was any good as a psychologist, we had a strong party of four. But the surgeon and lawyer planned to paddle the Tripper tandem, and the lawyer hadn't paddled much before. Hmmm. Did anyone bring the release forms?

No matter, it was a perfect day, cloudless and in the low 70s. Charly and company left to run shuttle while I bought my bus pass. This little plastic tag is almost a necessity for anyone running the 7 miles of the Lower Yock, as the general public are not allowed to drive to the take out. Instead everyone leaving the river, both commercial raft customers and private paddlers, must ride a Pennsylvania State Park schoolbus

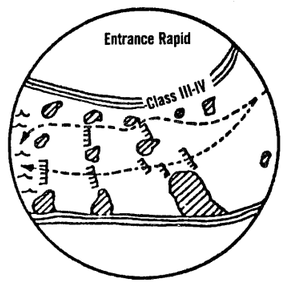


(with a trailer for equipment) one mile from the take out to a public parking lot.

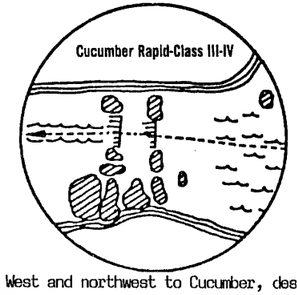
Action lovers and shuttle haters can avoid this by running only the "loop." Check the map and you'll see that the river loops back hard on itself at Ohiopyle. Almost half the good rapids and nearly a third of the gradient for the lower Yock is packed into the first 1.5 miles. You can take out on river right below Railroad Rapid and carry your boat across the neck of land surrounded by the loop. This would be a fairly short walk if you could put in as soon as you reach the river, but you can't run the falls, or rather you'd better not look like you plan to, or the park rangers will assess your rear deck. So by the time you cross the bridge and reach the parking lot and put-in, you've walked about half a mile. Not too bad if you can walk with a C-1 balanced on your head like me, but a painful option for open boaters.

I thought about the option of walking out after the loop while waiting for the others. How hard was the lower Yock? I'd formed a working assumption that it was somewhere between Chattooga sections 3 and 4 in difficulty. After a .500 day on the New, I could probably handle it. So I tried to relax while listening to raft guides explaining reality to their crews. "If your raft runs into a big rock like Dimple, your guide is gonna scream 'SHIFT!' If he's real excited, sometimes he forgets the F! (laughter) And you gotta shift to the downstream end of the raft in a hurry, or the current'll drive you up on the rock and even flip the raft." The guides were pretty happy about the great weather and a rather good August water level of 2.1'.

After an indecent interval, the doctor, lawyer and Charly the chief appeared and we walked the boats down to the water. The put-in is a wide pool of still water below the falls, a great staging area for weekend hordes. While our tandem tied everything in, I got in and out of the boat a couple of times, and decided not to try a roll, in case I didn't like the result. Soon enough we started round the loop, first south past a little warmup rapid, and then SW into Entrance Rapid, a putative 3-4 series of ledges described by Burrell and Davidson (Wild Water West Virginia) as "...a long tortuous course into twisted currents." 'Twasn't too bad, a little like the broken ledges between Double Trouble and the

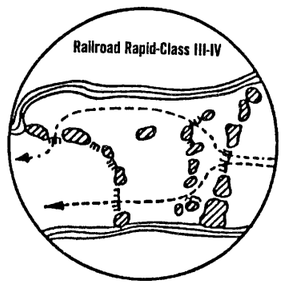


Doldrums. Charly was spearing every eddy in range. I was starting to relax (loose hips... think loose hips) when I turned around and saw the tandem swimming. Charly and I beat them to the leftside eddy. In for a long day, I said, but Charly said no, they'd be fine, that Entrance was the worst rapid on the run for swamping opens.



West and northwest to Cucumber, described by B&D as a long rock garden preceding an extremely vigorous drop through a narrow passage, "...what it must be like to be flushed down the john." I worked my way through the wide, shallow approach toward the lip of the drop, just right of a prominent rock, fully expecting to be up to my armpits in foamy crosscurrents. It was a relief and a mild disappointment to see just a vigorous wave train. I rode on, not in it, and eddied left for the next pleasant surprise: our tandem Tripper nuked through Cucumber unharmed. Trippers are smart boats.

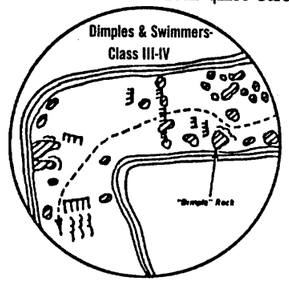
Next came some easy class 3s, Camel and Walrus (named for the rocks?), Eddy Turn and Dartmouth Slalom Rapid. The latter is the site of an annual slalom race. We got by with suggestions from Charly on where to run, while he ignored his own advice and tried every option he could. We had just one more rapid to go in the loop, Railroad, a biggie named for the bridge just beyond. Some big rocks funnel boats over a ledge and hopefully past a hole called Charlie's Washing Machine. Once past the hole, you have to scramble to the left or right to avoid a strainer screen of rocks just ahead. The Tripper flipped on one of these rocks. I got a little cross with them for being too passive about getting to the right bank, there being a long class 2 just below, and Charly got a mite cross with me. It happens. While the Tripper crew dumped and shook off, I went over to look at the Loop trail going upslope next to the tracks. No need to hit the trail, Charly obviously knew the Yock like the back of his hand, the guys in the Tripper were doing fine in all but the most difficult rapids, and I was realizing that this river was well within my abilities.



The next two miles, sometimes called the Doldrums, were mostly flat with just a couple of class 2s worth mentioning, Jim's Run Rapid and a good one called No Name. Time to enjoy the unspoiled scenery. Except for the railroad, the rugged character of the gorge had protected it from development. Because this section is far downstream from the reservoirs, release fluctuations are damped considerably, so the banks don't have the stripped-bare appearance we see on the Nantahala or the Metro Hooch. I should mention in this context that plans are afoot to add power generation facilities to the upstream rewervoirs, and the Yock paddling community is pressing for guarantees that new generation schedules will not louse up recreational paddling. Since this is the most-paddled whitewater run in the east, they have the numbers to get their way, if everyone pulls together.

When we got down to Dimple, we pulled out on the upstream right bank to scout and eat lunch. Charly, who seemed to know every raft guide on the river, recruited to our company a young woman guide who was enjoying a busman's holiday in her kayak. I forget her name; let's call her Jinks,though she wasn't.

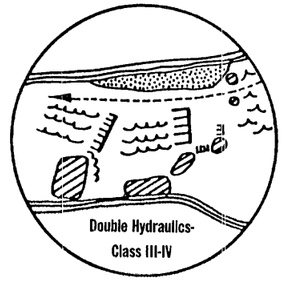
Dimple is one of the more difficult rapids. A strong sloping tongue runs between the left bank and Pinball Rock. It smashes straight into Dimple Rock, which according to Bill Nealy is undercut and has two fatalities to its credit. Most of the current veers off right, followed by a long series of class 3 broken ledges. As the river takes a hard left, there is a tolerable dumping eddy on the outside of the bend, if you can get there. Around the bend are a wide ledge and hole called Swimmer's Rapid (raft guides often invite their crews to jump out and swim the rapid), and then another train of big waves before the next real quiet stretch.

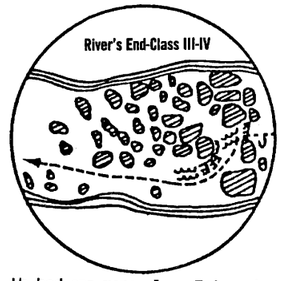


We watched a few rafts and kayaks go through, most taking the standard approach, cushioning off Dimple Rock to the right. Two kayakers pulled into a micro eddy on the left bank above the rock, then ferried across the tongue to the eddy behind Pinball. Charly came down the right side of the tongue and eddied behind Pinball. I found a bulletproof chicken route just right of Pinball and threaded past the broken ledges to an eddy in time to watch Two Guys in a Tripper run the main route with only momentary problems.

We all snuck to the right or left of the hole at Swimmers. On many weekends, you'd see one or two dozen paddlers lined up on both sides, waiting to surf the top hole, which is wide enough that two boats can surf at once. We saw one lone kayaker, probably starved for an audience. I passed up my big chance to surf the top hole without waiting, but found some big tailwaves to ride instead.

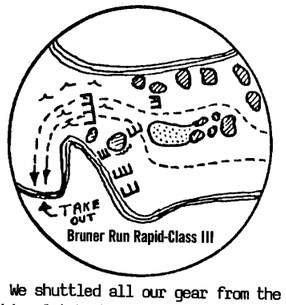
Then it was west through Bottle of Wine and around the bend northeast to Double Hydraulic, named for two powerful holes in close succession. Remember that if you scout from the leftside rocks like I did, it just makes it a lot harder to get over to the right side sneak route most others are using.





We had one more class 3-4 coming up, Rivers End, a rock-choked blind run through a tight little S-turn left of center. We all snaked through and managed to avoid Snaggletooth and Washover rocks, as well as the boulder garden below. Then a short break before Schoolhouse, an interesting class 3. Somewhere in this section, Jinks showed me a great wave called Terminal, so easy and predictable that you can surf it the rest of your life. We turned northwest into the last mile, through class 2+ Stairstep, and then through that legendary snipe hunt, Killer Falls (PG-13).

By this time I had quit worrying about the river, but gangrene in my legs was detracting from enjoyment of the scenery. Class 3 Bruner Run Rapid was a momentary diversion before a sprint to the left bank take out. We stretched and talked, then loaded everything on the bus, which had an easy pull uphill with most seats unfilled. I'd like to see the Yock on a typical weekend afternoon in June--- just once.



We shuttled all our gear from the upper parking lot back to downtown Ohiopyle, where we talked about what a perfect day it had been and then said our farewells. Tomorrow the upper Yock would be running. From the hip sockets upward, I was more than ready, but my legs were wanting a week off, so I loaded my gear, threaded through the country-side to the expressway, and set the cruise control on 63.

Some notes on the Yock for possible visitors: 2.1 feet on the lower Yock felt about like 1.8 on Chattooga section 3, and at these water levels, anyone who is comfortable on Chattooga 3 will have no difficulty adjusting to the Yock. At higher levels, Entrance Rapid will get to be like that first rapid on the Ocoee, something you'd like to have put off until later in the run. There are a fair number of noteworthy pinning rocks in these rapids, so I wouldn't try the lower Yock in an unblocked open boat. Water levels as good as I had are more likely in May and June, and for smaller crowds, try to paddle on a weekday.