GCA
GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION
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THE EDDY LINE

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GCA RAFFLE – DECEMBER 1, 2012 HOLIDAY PARTY WIN A DAGGER MAMBA

by Todd McGinnis

At this year's December meeting the GCA will hold its second annual raffle. The center piece of the raffle will be the Dagger Mamba we won for winning the NOC Canoe Club Challenge! If you are the winner of the Mamba, Dagger will allow the winner to choose the Mamba color and size of their preference - that is super cool! You do not have to be present to claim the Mamba if you are the winning ticket but we will need to know from you ASAP what size and color you prefer. In addition to the Mamba there were be other goodies donated by sponsors such as the Outside World, Endless River Adventures, Skirt Works, Shred Ready, Buckhead Beef, Doug Ammons, Team River Runner and Jeff West just to name a few. The list of items is ever growing and I will update the Web page in the coming days.

Before I tell you how to get your tickets let me tell you where the funds will be going. I am excited to announce that GCA will be donating a portion of the raffle funds to Team River Runners. The funds will be distributed equally to Team River Runners, River Access Fund, and to the GCA Operational Budget. Tickets are five for $5. We have provided a link on the GCA Web page where you can purchase on-line and pay using pay pal. If you like the old way, send me an email and we will arrange a way for you to purchase tickets. Also, you do not need to be a club member to purchase tickets.

If you raced for the GCA in the Canoe Club Challenge you will be receiving notification about your tickets in the very near future. Remember you get a ticket for each completed run during the races and volunteers get 5 tickets for each day they volunteered.

DISCOVERING MY INNER HAND PADDLER

by Jana Rogers

I have to thank Jeremy Thompson for exposing me to hand paddling. He made rolling look so easy! Out of curiosity, I tried his hand paddles at roll practice. Rolling was intuitive and yes, SO much easier than with a stick. Still, I kept working on my stick-paddle roll and continued using my stick paddle in the river. But I did buy a pair of hand paddles to keep in my stern, just in case of a lost stick paddle.

Then, on an Upper Hooch run, I decided to use the hand paddles. I was instantly in love! Everything was so intuitive and natural. I just seemed to know what to do with them. There was no struggle, no second-guessing about where or when to place the paddle... just me being one with the river.

I started working more on my hand paddle roll at roll practice and improved to the point that my pool roll was 100%.

Then I scheduled a lesson with Jeff West. At the put-in, I told Jeff about my hand paddling. He wanted me to use a stick paddle to learn the strokes and practice drills he teaches. He said I "didn't need to hand paddle" and that I should use a stick. I will never be able to ask him what he meant, but at that point in my paddling development, I figured if Jeff West says I should use a stick, I'll use a stick. I know Jeff had respect for hand paddlers (see his blog post, "For the Love of it: A Month of Driving, Gradient and Friendship"). He seemed in awe of how perfectly his hand paddling friend, Stan Guy, could nail his lines with hand paddles. Whatever his reasons for having me stick paddle, it altered the course of my kayaking.

Let me just say, that day with Jeff advanced my kayaking skills exponentially. Before that day, I had never caught an eddy or ferried. I never really saw the need to do so. With Jeff in the water nearby, I felt like I could do anything. He just inspired that kind of confidence. Toward the end of the lesson, after hours of flat-water drills and what seemed like endless eddy-catches, ferries, and peel-outs back and forth across the current on the Ocoee, it was time for roll practice. Jeff let me use my hand paddles! I rolled effortlessly. Jeff said it was the most beautiful hand paddle roll he'd ever seen. Then he promptly took them away and gave me back the stick paddle. I wasn't sure how it was going to go, but Jeff told me I could do it so over I went. There in the Ocoee, with Jeff standing waist-deep in the water nearby, I popped off my first stick paddle roll in the river! I was elated.

After that lesson, I put my hand paddles aside and focused on roll practice with the stick. I lost track of how many times I got it, and then lost it. I was so incredibly frustrated over that! The next Saturday, I went for my first run on the Nantahala River.

I remember before the run looking at Lesser Wesser and later, Patton's Run and thinking, "That doesn't look bad at all!" Ha! The main thing all of my more experienced group members stressed was that I needed to get to river right before hitting Patton's. No problem. Got it. From the safety of the put-in eddy, I could see the main river ripping by at what looked like break-neck speed. I had never been in water moving that fast. "Just get to river right." As I watched those I was supposed to be following easily glide over to river right, I started working my way over. And working. And working. Only it wasn't working. I was nowhere near river right. I was headed straight down the middle. The only thing that got me down Patton's was thinking, "What was that Jeff said? Sweep-sweep-draw-draw." I was utterly terrified but kept repeating Jeff's drill and finally it was over. I had made it to the bottom of Patton's. Jeff's instructions had at least temporarily overridden my thoughts that I had no business on that river and that I wasn't ready for it.

I made it successfully down the rest of the river that day (minus the falls-took out at the concrete beach). It was incredibly stressful. I was white-knuckling it the entire way. I felt unsteady and uncertain, like I might flip at any moment. I attributed this to running a new river that was definitely a big step up for me. I figured it would get easier each time I ran it.

I returned to the Nantahala a couple of weeks later. I was more nervous than I have ever been as we prepared to put in. I had to pull the neck gasket from my dry suit

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away from my neck because that pressure in addition to the way my stomach was churning made me fear I was about to lose my breakfast. Lots of practice on the Cartecay in the intervening weeks had me better prepared for the Nantahala. This time, I made it to river right with relative ease. I still had that terrible feeling that I wasn't really in control of myself or my kayak and that a flip was certainly imminent. I actually did have my first Nanty swim that day, not in some huge rapid but in a stupid eddy! I had made it past Delebar's Rock which had given me a little trouble on my first run. When I knew I had cleared it, I removed my nose plugs and relaxed... and promptly flipped on the eddy line. Because I had removed my nose plugs, the freezing cold water shot up my nose like a pair of ice picks. I made a feeble attempt to roll but it was hard to concentrate on what I needed to do when all I really wanted was to get my head above water as quickly as possible. It certainly wasn't a bad swim and the rest of the river went just fine.

The summer went on with many more Nanty runs including several successful runs of the falls. But no matter how many times I got back on the horse, I never shook that nervous feeling. It was most severe on the Nantahala but was ever present on all rivers and roll practice had become something I dreaded. I started to ponder what had happened. I had lost the joy I once felt in my kayak. It had become a time of stress and worry, with only relief at the take-out that I had made it down. I still looked forward to the river every weekend but felt torn and confused about my change in perception. I even considered quitting.

Then one day in late summer, I was headed for a run on the Metro Hooch and saw my hand paddles tucked away in a mesh compartment in the back of my van. "Why not?" So I put my Werner Powerhouse back into the van and grabbed my hand paddles. I slid into the river, took a few strokes, and immediately realized that I was home. I felt so incredibly comfortable and at ease. I sailed all over the river, ferried and caught eddies with grace and confidence. I had FUN! The stress was gone and the joy was back!

This trip was followed by a Cartecay run, which was equally wonderful. Then it was back to the Nantahala for my first hand paddle run. That sick feeling returned at the put-in but as soon as I got out into the current, it was like a dream. I had the best lines I've ever achieved on that river. I was able to put myself exactly where I wanted to be. There was an utter feeling of comfort and of being one with the river. The look on my face while running the falls says it all. Quiet confidence. Knowing I could work with the river to go where I wanted.

I felt so confident after that Nanty trip that at roll practice the following Tuesday night, I was discussing scheduling another lesson with Jeff to run the Ocoee, or at least Ocoee Lite, and I was fully prepared to announce my permanent hand paddler status to Jeff. The next morning, I learned of Jeff's passing on the Grand Canyon of the Stikine in British Columbia. So I will never get to have a conversation with Jeff about that first lesson and why he said what he did about me hand paddling. I will never get to explain my experiences over the summer and hear his thoughts about the whole thing. But I have to believe that Jeff would be happy and proud to know that I found my own way. I know that I appreciate hand paddling even more after experiencing life without them for a while and for that, among so many other things, I am thankful to Jeff.

I haven't picked up my stick paddle for weeks now and am planning to put it up for sale. After all as I have discovered, I am a hand paddler.

GCA WON MAJOR RIVER ACCESS BATTLE 25 YEARS AGO

by Roger Nott, GCA Historian

In November 1987, 25 years ago, the GCA favorably settled its first major legal action financed by its River Access Fund when Dennis Lankes agreed to move from the Upper Chattahoochee River and not to interfere with passage on any major Georgia waterway. Lankes had lived on the Upper Chattahoochee in the first house on the left opposite Smith Island and for five years had tried to prevent passage on the river in front of his house, frequently threatening paddlers with high powered firearms and shooting two club members of one GCA trip with a pellet gun. Attorney Craig Pendergrast handled the legal work for the GCA and our co-plaintiffs.

The Eddy Line of 12/1987 contains the full text of the settlement and an article by Editor Gary DeBacher about the case. It notes that factors influencing Mr. Lankes' desire to settle the suit included his wish to move to Cobb County, the State of Georgia's stated desire to join the suit in behalf of the plaintiffs, and our attorneys discovery of this 1820 Georgia act guaranteeing the navigability of the Chattahoochee and Chestatee rivers. The act begins thusly:

*"**An Act to keep open, remove, and prevent obstructions in the Chattahoochee, Flint, and Chestatee rivers, calculated to prevent the passage of fish, and the navigation of said rivers by boats, so far as respects the Counties of Gwinnett, Hall, Early and Habersham. Approved Dec. 22, 1820.***

"*From and immediately after the first day of February next it shall not be lawful for any person to obstruct or cause to be obstructed more than one-third part of the Chattahoochee or Chestatee rivers, as far up the said Chestatee River as the forks in Habersham County, by dams, fish traps, or other obstructions, and the main current of said rivers shall at all times be kept open for the passage of fish and boats.*

"Section II. No person or persons, under penalty of $20 per day, shall dam, stop, or obstruct the said Chattahoochee or Chestatee, from the lower shallow ford in Gwinnett County up the main channel of the river Chattahoochee to the upper line of Habersham County, and up the main channel of the river Chestatee as far as the forks in said County; but the same is hereby declared to be, at least one-third part thereof, including the main channels, a free passage."

This act also extended to the Flint River in Early County and provided commissioners and legal provisions for its enforcement. A note in an 1851 digest of Georgia laws notes that part of the law had been superseded as to the Chattahoochee and Flint rivers, but it was still in force as to the Chestatee. The digest purports to include all laws enacted in Georgia through 1851 but contains no law that revokes the right of passage of boats on these rivers. The digest cites laws which prohibit structures which obstruct fish on the Chattahoochee upstream of steamboat navigation and downstream of Dukes Creek and that allow existing mill dams in Hall County, so long as their construction accommodates fish migration. However, no cited subsequent law revokes the 1820 act's establishment of the right of passage of boats on the Upper Chattahoochee and Chestatee rivers.

In 1820 the Chestatee and Chattahoochee rivers formed the newly extended eastern boundary of the Cherokee Nation. It seems likely that the 1820 act was at least partially passed to guarantee treaty promises to the Cherokees guaranteeing passage of their small boats and the healthy migration of fish on these border rivers.

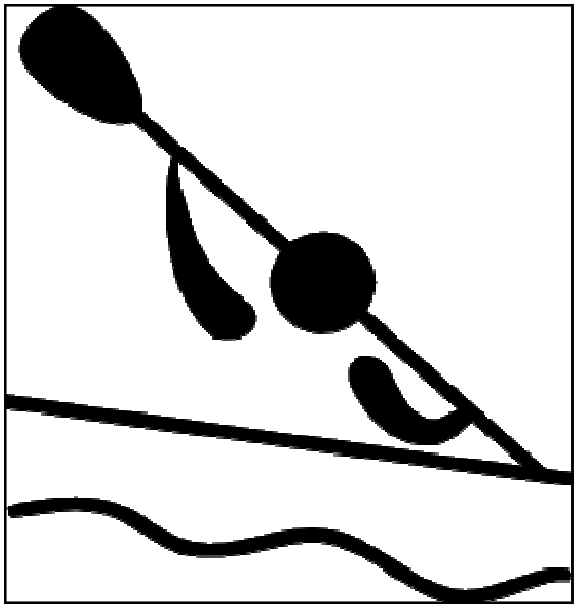
Habersham County in 1820 included all of Lumpkin and White counties till they were established, respectively, in 1832 and 1857.

The act names the "forks in Habersham County," as the upper limit of its guaranteed passage of boats on the

Chestatee. This point seems to be at least as far upstream as the current Tesnatee Creek confluence, about 1.8 miles upstream of the Copper Mines. In 1820 Tesnatee Creek was known as the Tesnatee Fork (of the Chestatee) and the Chestatee River upstream of Tesnatee Creek was known as the Frogtown Fork. There are many well-documented incidents of navigation of the Chestatee River in the 19th and early 20th centuries from the Chattahoochee to upstream of the current GA Hwy 60/US Hwy. 19 bridge. The only sizeable river forks in the Habersham County of 1820, now Lumpkin County, joining the Chestatee downstream of Tesnatee Creek are at Cain and Yahoola creeks. They seem unlikely candidates for "the forks" cited by the act. The next major streams to enter the Chestatee upstream of Tesnatee Creek are Boggs and Frogtown creeks, many miles further upstream. That there are major waterfalls, Grindle Falls and Tesnatee Falls, on both forks short distances upstream of the Tesnatee confluence makes the likely "folk" cited in the 1820 act.

Thus this 1820 act also seems to guarantee boaters legal access to the Middle and Lower sections of the Chestatee and to all of the Chattahoochee including and upstream of Gwinnett County.

Dan MacIntyre is GCA's long-time legal and river access advisor and is always solicitous of volunteer help with the club's ongoing efforts to guarantee citizens access to our Georgia waterways.



Keeping In Touch

To contact GCA, write Georgia Canoeing Association, Inc., P.O. Box 7023, Atlanta, GA 30357 .

Group mail: GCA maintains a group email list to help members share information of general interest. To sign up, send and e-mail to gcalist-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Website: Information about GCA, forms (including membership application and GCA waiver form), a link to the GCA Store and links to *Eddy Line* advertisers are all at http://www.gapaddle.com.

RUSSELL FORK TRIP REPORT-OCTOBER 5, 2012

by Todd McGinnis

Recently I had the opportunity to paddle the Russell Fork. The Russell Fork is located on the boarder of Kentucky and Virginia. There are three sections to the river; Upper, Middle (Gorge), and the Lower. The upper section includes class II to IV rapids but the majority of them are class III. The Middle section is known as the "Breaks Gorge" which is a class V playground littered with under cuts and invitations to pins. Rounding out the Russell is the lower section which is a class II run.

The Russell Fork is a free flowing river that benefits from the release of the Flannagan Dam each October for four weekends. For this run the put in is located at the base of the Flannagan which is the start of the Pound river. The confluence of the Pound and Russell is what makes the total posted CFS for the run.

My trip to the river was not the typical two hour drive to the Chattooga or the Ocoee but a full 6.5 to 7 hour drive. It is a great drive that takes you through Ashville (which mandates a stop at the Laughing Seed Café) and dumps you out on back roads that truly represent America. I saw some of the wealthiest to the poorest of our country. You see nice farms juxtaposed against row houses lining the sides of state highways. Most of the drive you wonder where the heck do these folks work. When you get into Virginia you know exactly where they work – coal mines.

Arriving in Breaks Virginia I made my way to Breaks Interstate Park where I located my campsite and got it all situated. From there I left to meet my paddling crew at their hotel, "The Gates Hotel". The Gates is the only hotel in the area and directly across the street is the only free standing restaurant. It was BBQ – just right for a vegetarian – no worries they took good care of me.

After dinner my paddling group decided on how we would set shuttle and what time to meet in the morning.

At the put in we saw some friendly and familiar faces from the Carolina Canoe Club. It is always great to see those folks! We put on the river directly below the dam at the outflow pipe. The current coming out from the base of the dam was a great warm up for the run. Our introduction to the run is a narrow river bed that provides for a rocky, shallow and fast start. It reminded me of a narrower version of Patton's Run.

The Pound has several surfing and spinning spots. I will say we quickly learned that one of the spin spots was extremely shallow. At one point my spin went splat and if it were not for a timely placed back deck roll I would have found myself getting smacked around by some unfriendly rocks.

Barry - Surfing

Shortly after the confluence of the Pound and Russell the next rapid is "Bartlick Dam" which looks basically like a bridge. This rapid is deceiving and one would think you can run it anywhere but you do not! Run this rapid on the right. There are two chutes on the right that you can choose from. The first chute is far right against the

bank but is somewhat boney and needs higher flows. The second chute is the one you want as it has a clean and defined tongue. Run it and then eddie out left or right and get ready to surf. Nice surf here and you know when you stick it because you can feel the bottom of the boat pulsing with the flow..

Bartlick Dam Rapid

Barry – finishing a surf

Once through the Bartlick the scenery and flow picks up. There are multiple rock gardens and it is pretty much straight forward read and run. As you approach Railroad Rapid a tight technical rock garden greets you. The open boat guys styled it through the left side and I came in behind them enjoying catching multiple eddies. My daughter would have rolled her eyes at me for catching <u>all</u> those eddies. The most impressive part of this rapid was not really the water but the scenery. As make your way around the bend the rapid comes into view. The back drop for this rapid is what I can guess to be about a 10 to 15 story tall gorge wall that wraps around the corner. In the foreground is the train trestle with tracks leading up to the tunnel cut into the wall. Pictures do not represent how cool the setting was. Below is a shot of the approach.

Train Rapid Surfing

Shortly after railroad we arrived at "20 Stitches" rapid. This is one of the most technical rapids on this section. It presents itself as a dynamic froth of fast moving water through an explosion of rocks. Sections are not that deep and you can tell that along with 20 stitches you might even get some nice bumps and brushes as the price for a poorly placed move. Multiple lines are available and the cross currents and dynamic eddy lines make it a lot of fun. If you had the time and were willing to make the walk back up it would be great fun to do multiple runs.

20 Stitches – Paddler Todd – Photographer Barry Smith

All of us had great runs through here and even finessed some fancy moves that represented the GCA well! We were lucky we had our crack photographer with us. Barry went ahead and got out and immortalized our runs so now we can prove we were there.

We stepped out and ate some lunch and then got ready for the 5 ledge sections that awaited us. Each of the ledges is a bit different but they are all read and run. I believe it was the second ledge where Barry showed me a nice boof on river left. There may be some of you out there that do not think Canoes can boof – you would be wrong. Barry laid down a nice boof. I followed and there is no sweeter sound than that of a well landed boof. Ledge #4 has some nice lines and it may have been ledge #5 that has a nice pillow rock at its base that is easily avoidable. If you are up for a challenge go above the pillow rock and ferry back and forth.

After ledge #5 you are finished and have about a ¼ mile paddle to the take out which doubles as the put in for the gorge. Loaded up the boats and made plans for day two. It is a great run and I think it is one that is well worth a weekend trip.

DIFFERENT STROKES

Reflections on Risk Taking

by Allen Hedden

The paddling world lost a real-life hero on September 11, 2012. The passing of Jeff West has brought about a flash flood of reflection, rationalizing, cliché quoting, etc., about such things as why we do what we do and why so many push the envelope so hard, knowing the possible consequences.

Over all, our sport is relatively safe. I've seen studies which have found that golf has a higher death rate (heart attacks, lightning strikes, etc.,) than paddling. We know the sport's potential for danger and we prepare ourselves accordingly. Follow the safety rules, get skills training, use appropriate equipment, know first aid and CPR, get swift water rescue training. We go to great lengths to minimize the risks. At the end of the day, the specter of death on the water still haunts us.

One of the most quoted clichés on this topic is along the lines "You can get killed walking across the street. If you let that fear stop you, you'll never do anything." Yes, you can get killed walking across the street. But you greatly increase the odds if you go out playing on the freeway at night wearing dark clothing and a blindfold.

The reality is that death is an integral part of life – the last part. We do not look forward to it, and every thread of our being tries to put it off as long as possible. We do not like to face up to this fact. Our conscious mind rebels at it and we rationalize ourselves into the mindset that the tragic accident will always happen to someone else; the horrible stroke of bad luck will be someone else's. But that wee small voice way in the back of our mind knows otherwise and constantly tries to remind us. That voice speaks louder to some than to others. Some listen to that voice more than others.

As a combat Marine, I learned very early in life what it's like living day to day knowing constantly that the moment you are living could very well be your last one. Ambush, booby trap, land mine, sniper round, improvised explosive device, artillery round, all these come out of the blue, ending your life violently and suddenly. The average, normal person reaches this realization much later in life. Heart attack, stroke, auto accident, plane crash, earthquake, tornado also come

out of the blue. The difference is that your life style, whether chosen or forced on you, affects how long it takes for you to come to this realization. The greater the odds of a sudden life ending event, the sooner you realize and accept the concept.

This does not mean that you just accept the concept and go about your usual routine. We all try to do things that will minimize the risks of these sudden events. But we also try to keep the knowledge and the fear from adversely affecting how we live our lives and what we are able to do. This is the basis for the "risk vs. reward" concept. Does the reward or benefit of an action outweigh the risks involved in it? Whether it's eating high-fat food or running class 5+ white water, we all consciously or subconsciously weigh the risks vs. the rewards and make the decisions.

These are our decisions and ours alone. However, the consequences of the decisions may affect many others. In the case of high risk paddling, the potential rescuers, the witnesses, the friends, the families, the other members of the paddling community are all adversely affected if we make a wrong choice. The wrong choices can even affect the sport as a whole, giving the non-paddling world a different and not necessarily a good impression of our sport and its relative safety.

There's another way of looking at it. Making a choice and dying for a cause is one thing, but making a choice and dying for fun is something else. One case can create a hero, the other a candidate for a Darwin Award. There are studies that indicate that the tendency to be a risk taker is very much a genetic trait. If that is the case, the gene pool of risk takers is surely getting smaller and smaller as time and the Grim Reaper march on. This phenomenon can slow the progress of civilization, since the risk takers are also the ones responsible for many discoveries, explorations, breakthroughs, and financial successes. So in that regard, all our risk takers are heroes in a way. It's easy to see why they are held in high regard. Some just make better choices on the risks they take. And some are just luckier than others.

An adage I've heard for years: There are old boaters, and there are bold boaters, but there are no old bold boaters. The older I get, the older I want to get.

Written on my 70th birthday in the twilight of my testosterone years….

ACA OPEN CANOE SLALOM NATIONALS

From NOC Web Site

2012 US Open Canoe Slalom Nationals were held October 5 and 6, 2012 on the Nantahala River outside of Bryson City, North Carolina. Open canoe paddlers from all over the country, as well as Canada flocked to the Nantahala Gorge for three days of racing on the challenging Nantahala Falls course. They competed in a variety of disciplines, encompassing various lengths of crafts, composite and plastic boats, and tandem and single classes. Many of these competitors see each other regularly on paddle trips in their hometowns, others are old friends who see each other once yearly at precisely this event.

The location of next year's Open Canoe Nationals has yet to be determined, but one thing is clear, this dedicated group of paddlers will make the long drive, canoe trailers in tow, ready to give it their all, once again, for that so-often-elusive clean run.

OCMULGEE RIVER TRIP REPORTS

by Jimmy Jones

July 22, 2012 was a nice sunny summer day and the river was running close to 1000cfs since the recent rains from the north filled up Lake Jackson nicely. It has been a couple of months since the Ocmulgee has had any kind of release from the dam and has been really dry.

We had 9 people make the trip. Larry Tomlinson, Chad Copeland, Randy Barfield, Matt Hickey, and Cameron Lathem and myself dropped vehicles at the take out and met the 3 paddlers that wanted to make this run for the first time. Cheryl and Tim Houston were there in their rec boats and Ben Richards was there in his canoe. We put in at the Jackson Dam and got some warm up strokes in the water. A few of us hit some practice rolls and I made my first no help no bottom complete roll. It felt really good. We paddled over a few small ledges and did some eddy turns and peel outs. After that, there is a decent stretch of flat-water where there were more rolls and general playing around. We saw some turtles and the normal ducks and other birds. Finally, we reached the seven islands section and after a short stretch and hydration break we proceeded down the river. The river really changes character here and there are a few easy shoals and ledges before we got to the 2-foot drop at Admission Rapid. I heard they named it that because if you paddle the flat-water section you had paid the price of admission to run the fun stuff, haha. We dropped over a few more shoals and arrived at a nice little drop that is about 2 feet that has a nice wave train at the bottom and some good surf and play areas.

After getting everyone through here and playing for a second we came around the bend in the river and there was about a quarter mile straight section and I announced that at the end was the Smith Mill Shoals. As we got closer the sound got louder and a noticeable horizon line made it look like the end of the river. As we go closer the river gets really wide here. Larry, Cheryl and Tim decided to do the far left side of the river which has a lot of nice class 2 to 2+ ledges as they want to run the larger class 3 drop next to the island on river right. The rest of us worked our way through the approach ledges. I finally stopped next to a rock at the opening of the first drop to boat scout for wood or other hazards. After a good look I paddled upriver about 10 feet then peeled out and lined up for the first drop, which is about 6 feet. As I dropped over, I leaned my boat so I could take advantage of the side current at the bottom to direct my boat towards an eddy I wanted to catch so I could film everyone coming over. I peeled out after the last paddler and then went down part two of the rapid and then we ferried over to the island and portaged back up and ran it again. After the main rapid there is a section of the river that has plenty of ferry and eddy practice spots. Ben was really working this area and looked good in the canoe.

After a brief paddle the final ledge at the takeout was in sight. We dropped over and Larry said that was the best looking hole he saw all day on the river, which drew some looks from the sunbathers, haha. The ledge looked like surfers rapid on the Nanty, as we had boats lined up waiting for there chance to surf. I got in there and ended up on the river right side and couldn't believe how strong the hole was. It reminded me of the hole at the bottom of Nanty falls. I got surfed pretty good and used it as a good learning experience.

After more fun several of us ended the day with some good barbeque at Fresh Air BBQ in Jackson.

THE EDDY LINE

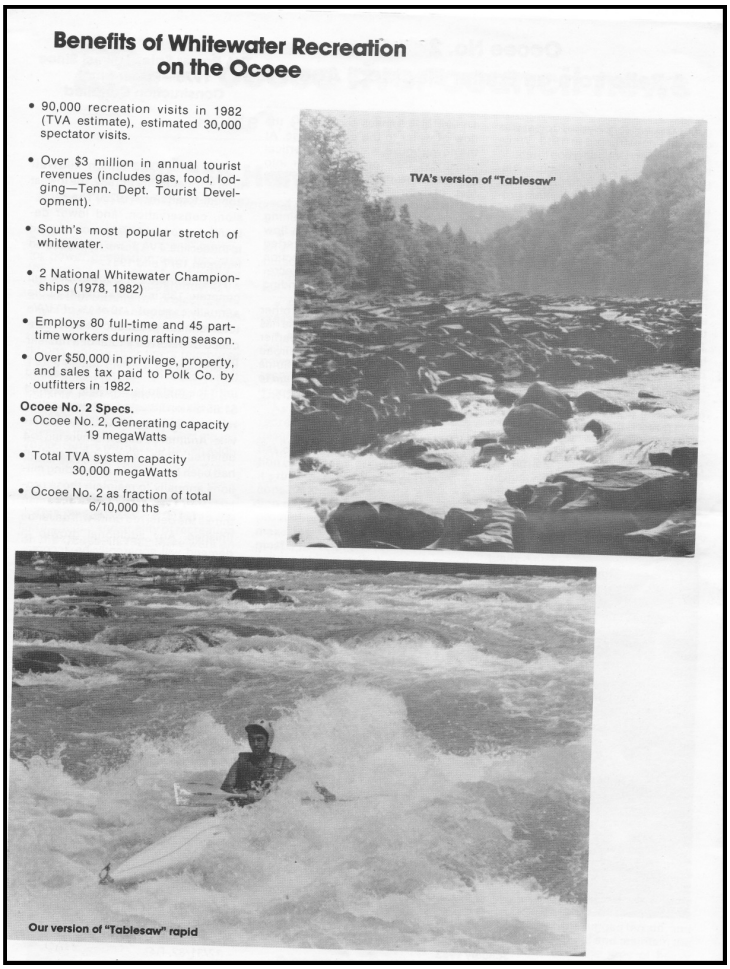
by Jimmy Jones

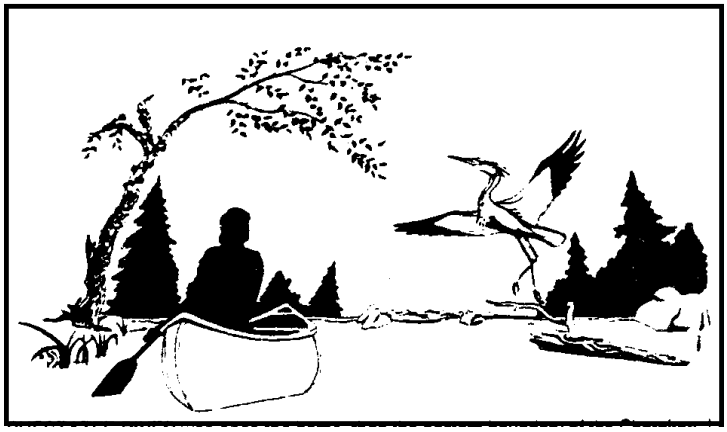
On October 3 , 2012 after a large amount of rain fell on Atlanta and drained down the Yellow and South rivers. Lake Jackson was almost to the point of overflowing. GA Power turned loose nearly 5oooCFS so a few of us planned a quick afternoon short trip. Josh Howell, Brian Paradis, David Bazemore, Chad Copeland, and myself decided to make the trip, unsure of what the river would be like and were very excited to see it at the upper limit on the AW website.

We put in at the site of Admission Rapid, which is normally about a 2-foot ledge but it had been replaced by some squirrely water and nice waves. We paddled down some swift almost flat-water, through a couple of small waves and were quickly at Smith Shoals. The left side of the river looked pretty big, but we didn't have the time to run it as daylight was getting shorter. We boat scouted the main class 3 chute just to the left of the island and I ferried across and dropped down a smooth tongue of water that directed me into the best waves I have ever seen on the Ocmulgee. We eddied out river right so Josh could scout the far right line which normally has no water in it but he felt it was runnable at that level. We set safety and watched as he dropped it and he had a good run through it. He said it was creeky but awesome. After that we made our way to the takeout just a few minutes down river.

The river was very fun at this level, but use caution because the river right side below the island where the main drop is has lots of strainers. It would be better to stay river left or middle.

Too bad we got out too late to go the BBQ restaurant again.





TRIP SCHEDULE

12/1	GCA Christmas Party at Garden Hills Rec Center (map)	Everyone	Lamar Phillips
1/17-21/2013	Manatee Paddle	Everyone	Marie Short
1/21/2013	(January 2013) Little River Canyon, Chairlift Section	Adv./Intermediate	Dane White
2/16/2013	(February 2013) Town Creek (Alabama)	Adv./Intermediate	Dane White

Check the calendar on the GCA website at http://www.gapaddle.com for additional trips, social events, safety classes,

Your Trip Could Be Listed in This Space — Call Cruise Master Jay Davis at 404-713-7586

KEY TO GCA SKILL LEVELS
Flat Water - no current will be encountered; safe for new paddlers.
Beginner - mild current, occasional Class 1 ripples; new paddlers can learn basic river techniques.
Trained Beginner - moving water with Class 1-2 rapids; basic strokes and bracing skills needed.
Intermediate - rapids up to Class 3; eddying and ferrying skills needed; kayakers need solid roll.
Advanced - rapids up to Class 4; excellent boat control and self-rescue skills required.

Signing Up: Call the trip coordinator listed to sign up for trips. Most trip coordinators will move a trip to an alternate venue if the water levels and conditions for a particular trip are not favorable. Call early in the week to ensure you get a spot on the trip, and in consideration for the coordinators, PLEASE avoid calling late in the evening.
Training Trips are a combination of recreation and training designed for those boaters who have completed a formal training clinic and would like some on-the-river time with instructors practicing what was learned in the clinic and expanding skill levels.
Canoe Camping Trips are multi-day trips, generally on flat or mild water, with at least one night of camping. For details on a scheduled trip, call the trip coordinator. To arrange a trip, call Vincent Payne at 770.834.8263.
To Volunteer To Lead Trips: Call Cruise Master Jay Davis at 404.713.7586. As usual, we need trip coordinators for all types of trips, from flat-water to Class 5 whitewater. Our excellent trip schedule depends on the efforts of volunteers, so get involved and sign up to coordinate a trip on your favorite river today! The GCA needs YOU!
Chattooga Trips are limited to 12 boats on ANY section on ANY trip, club trip or private (USFS regulation). Boating is prohibited above the Highway 28 bridge. Your cooperation in protecting this National Wild and Scenic River is appreciated.
Roll Practice: see gapaddle.com for information

GOOSE PASTURE—TRICK OR TRICK

by Mary Carroll

"Wacissa is a Timucuan Indian name the meaning of which has been lost" - sadly. So, I looked up the known Timucuan words and I respectfully submit "white crane" river. There are many other animals that we saw in this fresh water swamp such as alligators, eagles, snakes, herons, quail, owls, meadowlarks and cooters but the ghostly white cranes literally stand out and seem the most bountiful.

Our camp, Goose Pasture, was on the banks of the clear, spring fed waters of the Wacissa. The campground is primitive, level and has a big pavilion. Under towering live oaks filled with Spanish moss that house chiggers and other evil spirits we set up housekeeping. Tree branches mysteriously fell though the wind was gravely dead. We took shelter under the pavilion every time one came crashing down. We did not know how our tents would fare throughout the dark night ahead as the bombardment continued.

The tents did fine and except for a generator that disturbed some sleep all of us did awake Friday morning to a beautiful day and a hearty breakfast.

A huge part of the pie chart for a camping/paddling trip is taken up by food. We were very lucky this time- Buddy fixed and provided the suppers and breakfasts for everyone (for a very reasonable fee) and meals were quite delicious and nutritious.

We needed a big meal after the first day of paddling which was on the Aucilla River. Actually, if all we had done was paddle we would've been fresh as that morning's dew at the end of the outing but we had to carry our boats and gear nearly a mile at the take-out. Yup, a mile- that's what it felt like especially when we got lost trying to find the right paths through the oppressive and funereal woods.

The beginning of the trip had its own horrors. The put-in was under a bridge that trolls had abandoned for less steep banks and less suckier muck. This was the 257 bridge. After slogging through cockle-burrs and seed-tick infested grass we got in the river and started paddling and as per usual we threw all our cares and sorrows out and left them behind on the hideous bank.

The water of the Aucilla River is as black as a black cat at midnight on a tarred road- "the blackest river I've ever been on" was the lament throughout the day. Amazingly it never stunk which was a good thing since people did fall in frequently. There was a totally unexpected class II (some say III) rapid about 3/4 of the way into our 13 mile paddle. Nita and Ralph surprised us all by tipping their boats over and going for a swim. This rapid provided many lessons to be learned... later. I thought Ralph was going to drown and like a worried parent waiting up late for their kid to come home, I yelled at him first chance I got when I really just wanted to hug him and pop him upside the head all at the same time. Then Richard the Helpful pushed Connie into the river after lunch and Nita wasn't wet enough and fell in at the take-out. She was the only one wise enough to freshen up before the forced march to the vehicles.

Back at camp, after a vigilant bathing session in the Wacissa we ate the Mexican chicken dish Buddy cooked up then went straight to bed. I don't think anyone even said "nighty-night" - we were too tired. The last thing I heard before falling asleep was an owl hooting and the hollow sound of the porta-potty door slamming.

The plan for Saturday seemed simple enough- drive to the put-in (a boat ramp) and paddle the Wacissa River to our campground at Goose Pasture. Mullet on an invisible autobahn raced under our kayaks. Sometimes they jumped

(Continued on page 14)

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Thank you.

All About The Eddy Line

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(Continued from page 13)

across the top of the water- out of sheer terror is my guess. There was one fall-in that occurred at Blue Springs. Perhaps Elise mutinied IDK but Dan came up sputtering and soaking wet as though the hounds of hell were snapping at his swim trunks.

The lunch spot was very civilized with a covered picnic table and a short, sandy bank. Some took advantage of the inviting water and easy access to have a swim At this time of year the plant life is still green, luxuriant and inviting. One of Debbie's quests to identify a plant led her to venture into the grasses that loom over the water. Not long afterward I heard demonic squeals of despair. Spiders of all sizes also flourish in this area.

Matt had to bail on this paddle due to a troublesome posture in his kayak that caused his back to hurt. He spent his day hiking the orange trail at the previous days take-out. He will long remember that hike as the millions of chigger bites continue to release a nasty enzyme into his skin.

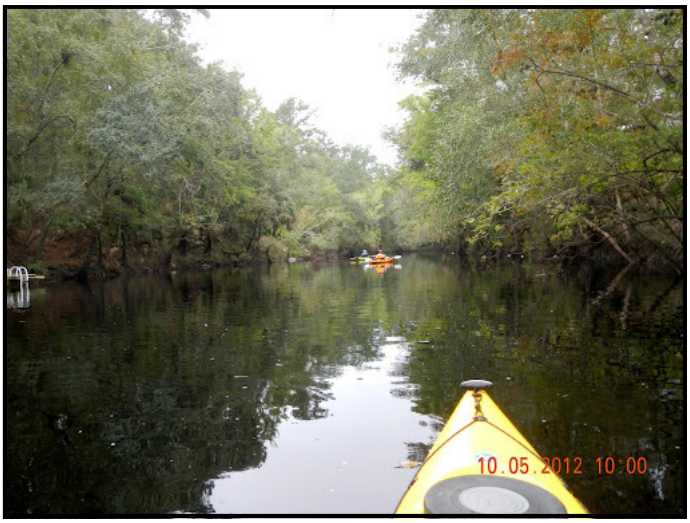
When the paddlers arrived back at camp bathing commenced immediately. We had to get it in before nightfall as the rumor was that alligators put extra effort in to feed once the sun goes down. Later that night Pat shined her flashlight into the darkened river and reported that an alligator, red eyes glowing, was trolling in our bathing area. With low-country boil, cookies and cake (thanks Deb & Elise) in my extended belly I dwelled on this for quite some time but did eventually fall asleep with the sound of crickets, frogs and the lesser hum (than Ted's) of Ralph's generator filling the night.

Sunday's plan was to get an early start and do a "quick" paddle on the Slave Canal. We put in from camp at 9 a.m. after the drivers got back from placing the shuttle at Nutall Rise. There are many braids of the river, mostly dead ends before you get to a sign pointing in the direction of the Slave Canal. I believe we took most of them. If it wasn't for the sign, which has been known to go missing, we would probably still be out there battling with trees that take you unawares. Richard summed up our progress well in a foreboding voice, ♫ "a three hour tour. A three hour tour." ♫

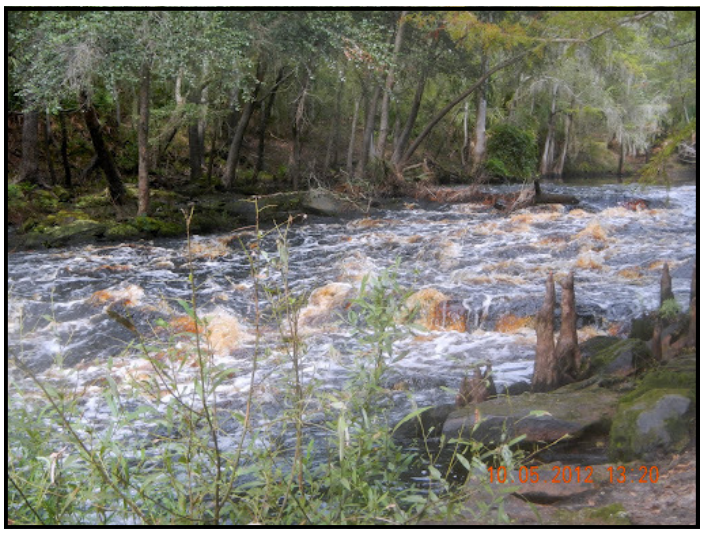
It takes a certain kind of person to enjoy portaging. One who enjoys a challenge and doesn't mind carrying heavy boats through muck that tries to suck the life out of you but settles for your shoes. Also, that person must be able to scoot down inside their boat to keep tree trunks from decapitating them. I loved the Slave Canal. It was tough but it was beautiful. Everyone worked together to make it through and that was beautiful too.

Three portages and five near decapitations later we arrived at the take-out around 2:00 pm and headed back to camp to pack up for the drive home. As far as I know everyone did arrive home safely like me; tuckered out and wiser.

So there were both tricks (mosquito evasion) and treats (Pat's rum cake and commiserating with fellow paddlers) on this trip. Whoever said, "if its easy it's not worth doing" had to be an avid paddler. I myself learned valuable lessons for future paddling trips- 1. spray down with DEET as soon as I get out of the water and 2. find out the trip leader's (aka Lamar's) interpretation of "quick" before packing my feed bag.



Aucilla River



Aucilla River Rapid

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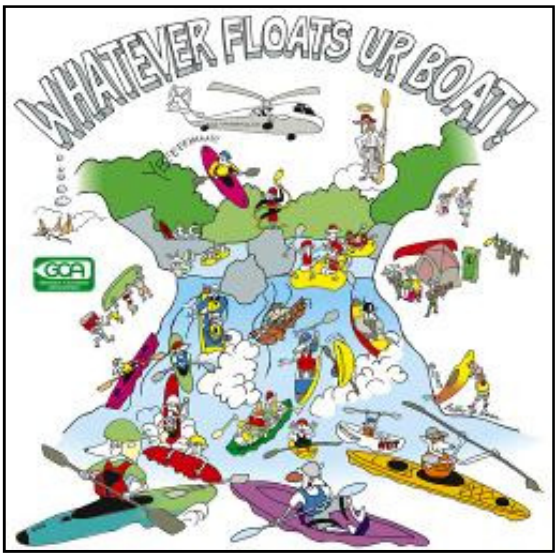
Wacissa River



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www.gapaddle.com

The purpose of the GCA is to have fun and promote safety while paddling.

GCA is a member-operated paddling club with over 800 family and corporate memberships comprising more than 2000 Individuals. Canoeists and Kayakers of all ages and paddling abilities are equally welcome. Some of our mutual interests include whitewater river running, creeking and playboating, river and lake touring, sea kayaking, paddle camp outs and competition and racing activities. We espouse conservation, environmental and river access issues as well as boating safety and skills development. Group paddling, training and social activities of all kinds are conducted throughout the year thanks to the volunteer efforts of our many members and friends. Membership is NOT limited to Georgia residents.