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Canoe Camping on the Upper Missouri River By Dick Hurd

The Missouri River was first explored by the Lewis & Clark Expedition, in 1804-1806, and no section of the river is more closely associated with that event than what is now labeled the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, which includes the White Cliffs and Missouri Breaks sections. Except for cattle (in your mind substitute bison) this area is little changed from over 200 years ago. This trip has been previously reported by Fred Couch in the November, 2002, Eddy Line, so consider this an update.

The assembly point is Ft. Benton, Montana, and the canoes and shuttle were provided by Missouri River Outfitters. Seven Boy Scout leaders and I began a seven-day voyage on July 1, 2021. The put in was at Coal Banks Landing and the take out was 108 miles down river at the James Kipp Recreation Area. The

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shuttle back to Ft. Benton was almost three hours! The BLM has two excellent and essential boaters' guides, which include extremely detailed maps of the entire route. There is no cell service, so I rented a satellite phone.



The river varies in width from 200 to 400 yards, and the current is a languid 2-3 mph. There are shallows, gravel bars, islands, and what they label rapids, which are merely short runs of standing waves. The scenery is spectacular. This section is crossed by one bridge and one ferry, but is otherwise very isolated. We saw no other paddlers the entire trip. Sadly, the river is polluted by the approximately 500,000 cattle browsing the adjacent lands, so the water is not potable.

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(Upper Missouri, continued from page 1)

We had to carry water: 1 gallon/person/day, which meant 14 gallons/canoe. The area is very dry, and I saw absolutely no side stream or spring that might have sufficed. Our biggest paddling challenge was wind, usually a headwind. When it whips up whitecaps, you had best get off the water. The other challenge was heat. Temperatures were in the 95-100 range, and there is precious little shade.



Camping options are

numerous, consisting of developed boat camps and primitive boat camps. The only difference is the presence of a privy at the developed sites. These are all well marked on the maps. There is NO camping on private lands, and camping on public lands would be possible, but we found steep banks and dense vegetation to be an obstacle.



The camping areas usually have large stands of cottonwood trees,

whose shade is most welcome. Besides the usual pack it in/pack it out ethic, ALL human waste must be carried out as well

(unless there is a privy), and the outfitter provided 'wag bags' to accommodate this issue. One night, at 2:45 AM, we were awakened by a terrific thunderstorm with high winds, lightning and thunder that lasted for 2 hours. It was like being under an artillery barrage....not much sleep that night, but we survived.

There was lots of wildlife: golden and bald eagles, prairie dogs, beaver, otter, American white pelicans, mule deer, one big horn sheep, and one rattlesnake! There are also fish and very large fresh water mussels.



So, if you are a Lewis & Clark buff, or just looking for some real adventure, put this on your bucket list.—EL

GCA welcomes paddlers from all races, genders, and sexual orientations. We will continue to strive to promote diversity among the paddling community and work to create a safe space for all to enjoy our paddling adventures.

Trip Report: Chattooga Section III By Roger Nott

On June 13, 2021, we had a great trip on this wonderful river, which was at 1.77 on the USGS gauge, a low medium level. We were David Asbell, Scott Cole, Brad Keene, Tom Krisko, Brannon McKay, and Hunter Watkins in kayaks and I in a Buffalo Canoe. Rain had been predicted for most of this balmy Sunday, perhaps leading to two registrants cancelling at the last minute and four others not showing up when we met at 10:30 at the Bull Sluice parking lot. Nevertheless, except for a few minutes of sprinkles, it held off after the trip.

We shuttled in two vehicles to Sandy Ford and made good time on the river, passing another large group at Second Ledge.



They caught up to us just past Eye of the Needle and were enjoying lunch and refreshing swims at one of my favorite Chattooga diving rocks, where many of them joined in the fun



and were instructed in back flips by David.



We caught up to them again at Bull Sluice, where our group ran well but we got to witness some remarkable carnage.



I think a great time was had by all. Thanks men for a great day and especially to Brannon, who treated me to supper that evening at La Pachanga in Clayton—EL

Different Strokes

A Tale from Knocks College
By Allen Hedden

Learning from the mistakes of others is far better for your wellbeing than making them all yourself. This is your opportunity to learn from one of mine.

This adventure occurred many years ago before my involvement with the GCA. I had not been paddling white water very long, had no formal training and only had a handful of friends who paddled. I got together with two of my paddling buds, David and Rick, and planned a trip on the Chestatee, putting in at the Coppermine access point. None of us had run it before, but our research told us it was basically a class 1-2 run, so we felt pretty confident that the three of us could run it safely.

We met at the Coppermine the morning of our run, a beautiful, sunny day in mid-April with temperatures in the mid-eighties. After checking out the copper mine tunnel, the first thing we did was scout what we could see of Coppermine Rapid. We rigged our boats, got dressed for the river and set shuttle. The standard cold weather/water protection in that day was the wet suit with warm undergarments and possibly a paddling jacket and pants. With the weather being what it was, I chose to roll up my wet suit and paddling jacket and stow it below the stern deck "in case I needed it". Yes, I said stern deck. Though a dyed in the wool open boater, I was paddling a kayak at that time.

David and I had bought two Phoenix Cascade kayak kits and put them together a few weeks earlier. These were combination design boats, white water and down river. We had skirts, paddles, helmets, booties, etc., but we had no rolls.

We set out around mid-day, feeling really good about ourselves and our new adventure. Unfortunately, Coppermine Rapid quickly threw cold water on our plans, literally. Two out of three of us made the rapid just fine, but the third one (myself) didn't fare so well. I managed to flip in the first drop, punched out and swam. Not a pretty run. I managed to swim myself, my boat and paddle to shore on river right probably a hundred yards or so below the rapid, at which point I was COLD and exhausted. I was barely able to crawl up on the beach. That water was Nantahala cold, even in mid-April.

After catching my breath for a minute or two, I was able to stand up and try to warm myself up in the warm sunshine. I was shivering to the point that I could hardly talk. My friends convinced me (not reluctantly) to retrieve my wet suit from the boat and put it on. Yes, this was "in case I needed it". After a few minutes of standing in the full sunlight with my black wet suit on, I was still not feeling any warmer. At that point, one of us, I don't remember who, suggested we ferry back across to river left where the truck was parked and get in my truck (the shuttle vehicle), turn on the heater full blast, and warm up before continuing our adventure.

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(Hard Knocks, considered from page 4)

We decided to go ahead and eat our meager river lunches while we waited on me to warm up.

After another thirty minutes or so of the three of us sitting in the cab of the truck, with me shivering and them sweating, we decided that discretion was the better part of valor. We loaded up the boats and headed to the take-out, picked up the other vehicle and changed into street clothes (except me -- I put on the warmest stuff I had with me). On the way home I kept the heater on high and still didn't start to feel warm for at least another 45 minutes to an hour.

Our adventure had become a misadventure, also known as a learning experience. The most important lesson I learned that day was to dress not just for the weather, but for a swim. Had I been wearing my full complement of cold weather/water gear, I wouldn't have gotten so cold (spelled H-Y-P-O-T-H-E-R-M-I-C) and we could have gone ahead with our adventure. We all would have been happier campers and had a fun day. My motto about cold water since that day has been to dress for a swim, no matter what. Then if you get too warm, it's easy enough to take a dip in the water to cool off -- much easier than trying to warm up after you get hypothermic.

So that's my Knocks College story for the day. If you've had a similar "learning experience" in the School of Hard Knocks, please share it with us. We all would pre-

fer to learn from the mistakes of others rather than making them all ourselves. I may even have another tale or two about Knocks College to share in the future. SYOTR!! - EL

**CIRCLE OF LIFE ON THE
CHATTOOGA RIVER**
by Hank Klausman

Of all the rivers I have paddled in the last half century, the Chattooga remains my favorite. Flowing out of the North Carolina mountains, it forms the northeast boundary between Georgia and South Carolina. The remote and pristine beauty earned it designation as a protected river in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1974. The Chattooga offers all levels of whitewater, ranging from mild Class II to ultimately challenging Class V. Its danger is also legendary. Two of my paddling friends have died there.

After seeing the movie *Deliverance*, which was filmed on the Chattooga in 1972, I borrowed a canoe and tried the Class III and IV rapids of Section Three with my ten-year-old son David. There was no flotation in the boat and we wore horse collar life vests without helmets. As you might guess, it was a disaster. Our borrowed Grumman aluminum canoe was so beat up, I had to use a sledge hammer to straighten it out. The other father/son team who went with us never paddled again, and my son had nightmares for a few years.

But we kept at it, graduated to kayaks and be
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(Circle of Life on the Chattooga, continued from page 5)

came good enough to paddle the hardest Section 4 with Class V rapids. Since the Chattooga is natural flow, water levels are critical for fun and safe paddling. So, when more reliable dam release rivers, like the Ocoee, became available, we only visited the Chattooga at ideal levels.

Fast forward to 2020. I'm 80 years old and don't do Class V any more. My son, David, has four grown kids who all paddle some. He rarely paddles, but always looks like he just won the Junior races, which he actually did as a teenager. On June 22 he agreed to return to our favorite river when one of my oldest paddling buddies, David Asbell, called that the water level was perfect. The sky was solid blue and the Mountain Laurel and Rhododendron were still in bloom.

We decided to run from Thrifts Ferry to Woodall Shoals, which is called Section 3 & 1/2. It retains the character of Section 3 and includes the first rapids in Section 4.

One price of admission to the Chattooga is you have to carry your boat in and out a quarter mile

Just below the Thrifts Ferry put in is a sweet rapid with a great surfing wave. About one mile in, we came to the Chattooga Classic-Bull Sluice. The entrance is class III into the eddy on the SC side (river left) above the main drop. Then there are three choices of lines. The double drop on the right is class IV. A big single drop is in the middle and a high water Creek line is on

the far left. On summer weekends, there is usually a large crowd to cheer you on, because the Highway 76 access is just downstream.



Hank running Bull Sluice

My run of the Bull gave us the first excitement of the day. I flipped at the bottom and took a few tries to get back up. It reminded me how important the roll is to kayakers. If you roll, basically nothing has happened. If you swim, then at least you have to recover boat and paddle, empty boat and get back in. You can imagine the worst. I'm sure more kayakers have died out of their boats than in them.

Next up was Surfing Rapid, one of the better playspots on the river. A raft company was swimming customers through this rapid. Both David's tried cartwheels and enders, while I sat in the big recovery eddy and took pictures.

Screaming Left Turn is a Class III thrust through a three foot slot under an overhanging rock; then an immediate 90 degree left turn to avoid smashing into a boulder.

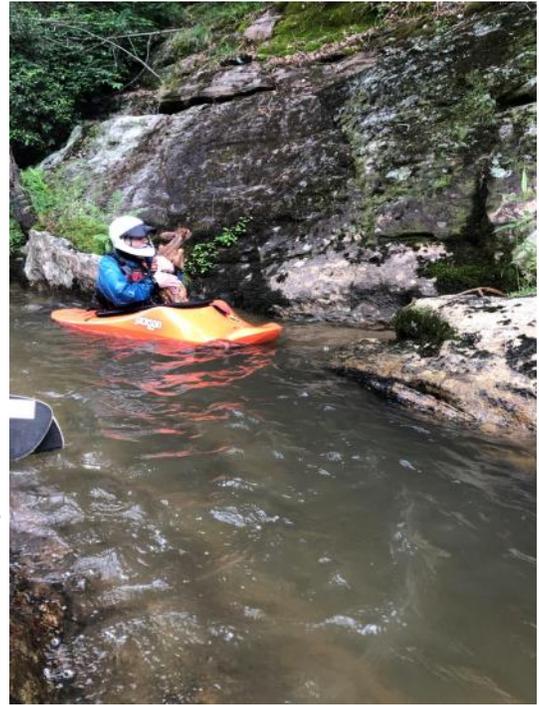
Below this there are several Class II+ rapids.
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(Circle of Life on the Chattooga, continued from page 6)

This is where we had our second life lesson for the day. My son, David, who had not swum out of his kayak for since he was a teenager, took a swim. Ironical that he flipped in a nothing rapid. But when he went over, he felt his head bumping along the bottom, so he got out before even thinking about rolling. Thankfully, we got him back together quickly and he was not hurt.

But the excitement was not over. We had not paddled more than a few hundred yards where the river narrowed and banks on both sides got pretty steep. I thought I kept hearing some animal call that I could not recognize. Almost like a braying, but not quite. As we came around a bend, we saw a coyote on a flat rock a few yards off the right bank. He had a deer fawn pinned down and was trying to finish it off. But the fawn was kicking and making the weird noises I had heard. The coyote was biting down on his right hip. I yelled at the coyote and he immediately jumped to the right bank and disappeared. The fawn had slipped or jumped into the river and was having trouble keeping its head above water. It swam over to right bank but it was too steep to climb out. It then was washed down stream to left side. Again, the rock bank was too steep to get out. We tried to nudge the fawn with our boats to shore, but it panicked and swam away. Finally, we got the animal between our boats. David Asbell gave me his paddle and scooped it up in his arms. We could see the right hip was torn open. We pushed his boat over

to a tiny eddy on the left bank and tried to deposit the poor animal on a relatively flat rock next to the bank. The attached photo shows Asbell



holding the fawn and you can see the hip wound. But it tried to climb the steepest part and fell back in. We tried several times to get the fawn on the flat rock. But it was so terrified of us, it would swim away when we got close. The banks were too steep and current too fast for any of us to exit our boats to try to help the fawn get out of the river. After several efforts, since the fawn was on the opposite side of the river from the coyote and in a relatively calm spot, we decided we had to abandon our efforts. But I still wonder if we could have done more.

There were more rapids to handle and Rock Jumble with a ten foot sloping ledge was coming up. We boat scouted and ran on far left.

The last challenge was Woodall Shoals. It is a nice Class III+ rapid with a very dangerous, but unimpressive looking Class 5+ hole. The *(continued, page 8)*

(Circle of Life on the Chattooga, continued from page 7)

first death I knew about on the Chattooga was here. Some try to run this hole, but all I can say is don't. The standard route for those wise enough to avoid the top hole is to hug the right river bank. This leads you over a ten foot slide. From there you can choose one of many lines down a natural slalom course.

The take out is always the hardest part of the run for me. You have at least a quarter mile hike straight up a trail to the parking lot. I start out carrying my boat, but end up dragging it most of the way. While recuperating from the climb, we talked about some of the life lessons we had experienced today.

First, I hit my roll after flipping at Bull Sluice. I can roll on both sides every time in the pool, but my combat roll in the river has never been 100%. So, this life lesson was to keep trying and never give up. On



the flip side, David had not swum out of his boat in maybe 25 years, and he swam today. Lesson was we are all between swims.

And the incident with the fawn just reminded us of the inevitable circle of life which is more apparent to us when we are out in nature. We all begin and end the same way.

Was a great day for me. Fun time, good company, plus lessons learned. I plan to return as long as I can. Then I'll just write about it.

See You On The River, Hank Klausman—EL

KEEP YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS CURRENT

Each month numerous "copies" of the pdf version of *The Eddy Line* bounce back due to bad or outdated email addresses. If an email to you bounces back, you will be deleted from the recipient list until we get an updated email address.

TRIP AND CLINIC SCHEDULE

GCA August Paddle Trips

August 7th - Wildcard - Class II

August 7th - Hiwassee - Powerhouse to Reliance - Class II

August 8th - Hiwassee - Powerhouse to Reliance - Class II

August 8th - Nantahala Run - Class II+ (III)

August 14th - Chattooga 3.5 - Class II-III+ (IV)

August 15th - Wildcard - Class II (III)

August 21st - Chattooga IV for First Timers - II-IV+

August 22nd - Hiwassee - Powerhouse to Reliance - Class II

GCA August Training

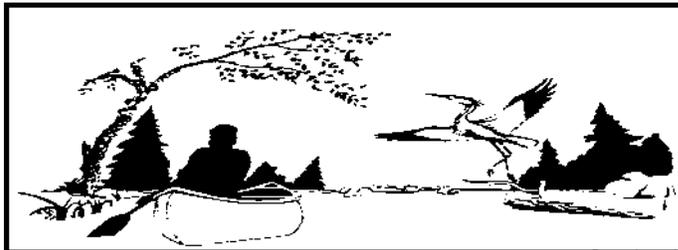
July 31st & August 1st - I Broke My Paddle – Now What?

August 1st - Broken Nose Eddy Clinic

August 8th - Underwater Comfort - Improve Your Mental Game

Please see the GCA Calendar for details, updates, and to sign up at www.gapaddle.com.

For any questions or class suggestions, e-mail eddylineeditor@gmail.com.



To Volunteer To Coordinate Trips email Cruisemaster Terri Abbott: abbott.terri@gmail.com.

As usual, we need trip coordinators for all types of trips, from flatwater to Class 5 white-water. 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!

KEY TO GCA SKILL LEVELS

Flat Water - no current will be encountered; safe for new paddlers.

Beginner - mild current, occasional Class 1 riffles; 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.

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Nomadic Flow Outfitters is Atlanta's premier paddlesports retailer conveniently located just north of Atlanta in Canton, Ga along the beautiful river banks of the Etowah River. We offer a full service retail shop carrying all the best brands in the industry, rental/demo programs, paddling schools and guided trips. Our friendly and knowledgeable team is dedicated to serving our amazing paddling community and making paddling adventures more easily accessible for all. So whether you're looking for those relaxing float trips, fishing your local spot or chasing after the rush of whitewater our team at NFO is here to help you!

Keeping In Touch

To contact the GCA, write Georgia Canoeing Association, Inc., P.O. Box 611, Winston, GA 30187.

Groupmail: GCA maintains a group email list to help members share information of general interest. To sign up, send an e-mail to gcalist-subscribe@groups.io.

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>.

Facebook: Visit the GCA Facebook page for photos, video, trip reports, or to join an upcoming impromptu trip.

ALL ABOUT THE EDDY LINE

The Eddy Line, the official GCA newsletter, is available in pdf format. To subscribe, contact Vincent Payne at 678-343-5292 or vincent.payne9354@gmail.com, or mail your request to P.O. Box 611, Winston, GA 30187.

Submissions/Advertising: All submissions and advertising should be sent to *The Eddy Line*, at: EddyLineEditor@gmail.com.



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[WE'RE ON THE WEB:]
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 500 family and corporate memberships comprising more than 1500 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.