

# HIKING & PADDLING NEWS

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## HIKING

### **A.T. - YELLOW MOUNTAIN GAP TO U.S. 19E (Scheduled for Sat, 5 Feb 94)**

*Leader: Rick Culbertson (615.239.9795)*

*Difficulty: Moderate*

This is a scenic hike over bald mountains (Yellow Mt. and Hump Mt.) which offers 360 degree views of the surrounding mountains. The hike is approximately 7-8 miles and has two uphill climbs and a long descent from Hump Mt. to U.S. 19E. We will meet at 8:15 AM at the Colonial Hts. Burger King. We should be back in Kingsport by 5:00 PM. I can also meet others on the way (i.e., Johnson City). Call 239.9795 for further details or if you have an alternate meeting location.

## **Buffalo Mountain Park**

**(Scheduled for Sat, 12 Feb 94)**

*Leader: Bob Sherrill (615.323.3997)*

*Rating: Moderate*

We will meet at the Eastman parking lot in front of B-215 (personnel) for a 9:00am departure. We will drive to Buffalo Mountain park in Johnson City. The hike will be approximately 8 miles in length. In the winter time there are many good views along this hike. If the weather is questionable, we'll make a decision at the meeting point. Contact Bob Sherrill for more info.

## **MORRILLS CAVE HIKE**

**(Scheduled for Sat, 12 Feb 94)**

*Leader: Greg Kramer (615.349.6125)*

Meet 10:00 AM between the Burger King and McDonalds in the Colonial Heights Walmart parking lot. This is one of the larger caves in East Tennessee and will be a very interesting cave hike. Even though this is the cave I led a trip to last year doesn't mean we will see the same parts of the cave. There's a large back section to the cave that we have not traveled to or we might go into the white room section of the cave. So if you want to try caving for the first time or want try it again, come along. You will need good sturdy shoes, warm clothes (prefer them to NOT be cotton) that you won't mind being a little browner than they have been, two flashlights (I will try to tape one onto your helmet), water and a snack (noncrushable), a complete change of clothes and a garbage bag for your cave clothes. Please contact me if you are interested because I have a large but limited number of helmets. Contact Greg Kramer 349.6125 for details.

## **WHITETOP MOUNTAIN TO VIRGINIA CREEPER TRAIL**

**(Scheduled for Sat, 19 Feb 94)**

*Leader: G. S. Luttrell (Phone 615.239.9854)*

*Rating: Moderate*

We will spot a car at the Va. 728 access point to the Virginia Creeper Trail then drive to Va. 600 at Elk Garden to begin a 10 mile hike crossing Whitetop Mountain. The meeting point will be the lot between Burger King and McDonalds in Colonial Heights at 8:00 AM. Since weather could be a problem, contact the hike leader if you are interested..

## **SOUTH BEYOND 6000 HIKE**

**(RESCHEDULED FOR LATE MARCH 94)**

*Leader: G. S. Luttrell (Phone 615.239.9854)*

Due to conflict with the Winter Dinner Meeting, this hike (originally scheduled for 26 Feb) will be rescheduled for late March..

## **WINTER DINNER MEETING**

**(Scheduled for Sat 26 Feb 94)**

*Leader: Steve Perri (615.349.5091)*

The 1994 Winter Dinner Meeting will be held at the Eastman Recreation Area Cabin on 26 Feb 94. The meeting will provide an opportunity to break the winter doldrums and socialize with friends. The program will be of interest to both paddlers and hikers alike in that an emphasis on safety in outdoor recreation will be presented. A video stressing safety called "Cold, Wet and Alive" will be presented followed by another for entertainment called "Steep Creeks". Awards will also be presented for the Hiker,

Paddler, and Maintainer of the Year. We are also fortunate in that Nantahala Outdoor Center will be providing a presentation on whitewater paddling. A social hour will begin at 6:00 PM, followed by dinner at 6:30 PM. Dinner this year will be catered by Wright's of Kingsport. The dinner menu consists of: ham and roast beef, new potato's, green beans, cooked apples, rolls, tossed salad, iced tea, and an assortment of pies for dessert for \$8.00/person. A child's plate is available for children under the age of 10 years old for \$4.00 each. Please list the names of everyone in your party along with the request for the number of dinner plates for adults and child's plates on the reservation form so we will know how many dinners to order. Door prizes will also be awarded from this list.

<b>TEHCC DINNER MEETING RESERVATION</b>	
<b>Name of Party</b>	
<b>(Please Print):</b>	_____
<b>Phone No.</b>	_____
First Names of those in Party Wanting Adult Dinner (\$8.00/person):	_____
	_____
Names of those in Party Wanting Child's Plate (\$4.00/person):	_____
	_____
Make checks payable to: Steve Perri	

Please return your reservation form to Steve Perri, 180 Peppertree Drive, Kingsport, Tennessee 37664. I will need to receive your forms and checks no later than Tuesday, February 22. Please call 615.349.5091 for more information.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP WITH TRAIL ASSESSMENT**

*Joe DeLoach reporting*

The Appalachian Trail Conference would like each Trail maintaining club to do a formal assessment of its section of Trail. We have data that can be used for this assessment for the Unaka Ranger District (Spivey Gap to Laurel Fork Gorge) but have not done any formal assessment on the Watauga District. Morgan Sommerville from ATC would like to do the assessment on at least part of our Trail in the Watauga District sometime during the period from March 11-20. His preference would be to accomplish this on overnight trips, but Club members could accompany him on day hikes. The assessment involves taking notes about Trail conditions, measuring distances, and possibly taking an altimeter to work on an elevation profile. Any Club members who would be willing to help out on the assessment would be greatly appreciated. Please call Joe DeLoach at 615.753.7903, or Morgan Sommerville at ATC's Southern Regional Office in Asheville (704.254.3708), if you would be able to help in the Trail Assessment.

**PADDLING**

**WATAUGA OR DOE RIVER GORGE**

**(Scheduled for Sat, 19 Feb 94)**

*Leader: D. Fuller (615.764.7340)*

*Rating: IV-V*

By mid-February the East Tennessee rainy season should be in full swing and smaller

streams like the Watauga above the dam and the Doe should have plenty of water. Both these "creek" runs are rated IV-V. If flow conditions are too high/low for these streams, an alternate will be chosen - probably the Nolichucky if water is scarce and some other "creek" run if we have too much water. Contact Dewey Fuller (615.764.7340) to preregister and for trip details.

### **YMCA POOL ROLL PRACTICE (Scheduled for Feb - Mar, 1994)**

*Leader: Dewey Fuller (615.764.7340)*

The Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts and the Erwin Family YMCA will sponsor roll practice sessions at the Erwin YMCA (new building) every Tuesday from 6-9 PM starting 18 January 94 and continuing through 29 March. To cover costs to the YMCA, there is a charge of \$2 for A.P.E. members and \$3 for nonmembers. The plan is to have at least one instructor present at each session. Since this person will be able to assist only a limited number of pupils, if possible, team up with another person so you can assist each other in practice. The buddy system also helps reduce the problem of having too many boats in the pool at one time. There will be a water hose hooked up to the right of the main YMCA entrance which should be used to clean your boat before bringing it into the pool area. *(Editor's Note: Since there is some repair work being done on the pool that prevents it from being used, it's a good idea to call the YMCA at 743.3361 to make sure the pool is open before going for a session.)*

### **FOR THE RECORD**

#### **CHIMNEY TOP MOUNTAIN HIKE**

**8 January 94**

*(Don Baker reporting)*

This 4-mile 1/2-day hike started at Dane Faulkner's homestead (many thanks to Dane for his gracious tolerance of hikers) at the foot of Chimney Top and proceeded up the ridge to the frozen top. While this hike is short of distance, it is not for the faint of breath...it is straight up, with no switchbacks, and ends with a short "monkey-bar" climb up and over a small cliff. Views from the ridge are spectacular; we all passed on the opportunity to climb the lookout tower due to the high winds and semi-frozen hands. Dane's dogs and cat joined us for the hike, and a raven (the first seen by anyone in the group between the Smokies and the Shenandoah) made it's appearance to cap off a superb winter outing. Enjoying this cool, sunny, breezy hike were Don Baker, Dale Blakely, Owen Holbrook, Gether Irick, Liz West and Nancy Wilson.

#### **WET, WILD AND WONDERFUL**

**22-25 April 93**

*(Michael Bullard reporting)*

*Note: This report is a continuation of the article in the December newsletter*

West Fork of the Hood (about 20 miles north of Mt. Hood), Branch Creek to Punchbowl Falls. Rating: Class III-IV, with one drop at Class IV+ and one at Class VI, gradient 60-70 fpm. Cool, low 60's, rain/drizzle alternating with sunshine, estimated 600-800 cfs, water temperature 50's. Paddlers: Doug Smith, David Jordan, John Daffrion, and Michael Bullard

The drive from Portland to this Oregon jewel is up the Columbia River Gorge, one of the

Pacific Northwest's scenic landmarks -- to just imagine what those early river rats Lewis and Clark thought when they first passed this way. The countless waterfalls, rock outcroppings, spruce forests --- WOW!!!!

After exiting the interstate at Hood River, we navigated to our objective for the day, the West Fork of the Hood River. Our trip into the headwaters area took us by a Class III-IV section of the Main Hood, which according to the guide book is a great run in its own right (to many rivers, not enough time). From the takeout bridge, about 80-100 feet above the river, we scouted Punchbowl Falls per the guidebook's recommendation, and quickly went searching for the "last eddy" and the land route out of the narrow canyon above this mean looking drop. I believe the "Soggy Sneakers" guidebook says something to the effect that "many good paddlers have had difficulty here" --- an accurate assessment of the hole below this Class V+ 10-foot high riverwide ledge.

After doing the boat and equipment shuffle we were off to the put-in. At the first river crossing we noticed another group of boaters unloading equipment and decided to pull in even though the guidebook indicated the put-in was located about a mile further upstream. By electing to put on the river at Branch Creek, we avoided about a mile of Class III water and started directly above the narrow basalt gorge described in the guidebook. Branch Creek effectively doubled the flow volume and looked like a rip-snorter in its own right, though it was not described in the guidebook.

In the gorge section the river narrows at places to 15-20 feet in width with 30-40 foot high cliffs dropping straight down to rivers edge. The moss covered logs and rocks lining the river made the delicate transition from the deep blue-green water to the luscious green bank seem like a color palette prepared by a master painter. The narrow gorge, while not clogged with huge view obstructing boulders like the Watauga, did weave a serpentine course through a continuous series of Class III-IV boat scutable drops with moving pools leading from one drop to the next. For a paddler with a dependable eddy turn, ferry and excellent boat control this made for an exciting first couple miles.

Following the narrow gorge, river width increased while maintaining the same overall gradient and the river's character changed to a shallower continuous Class III-IV boulder garden very similar to the Ocoee between Broken Nose and Slice-and-Dice. It was on this section that we encountered our first "limbo log". A limbo log spans the entire river above the water level and the boater negotiating the log must either bend forward or lay back on their boat deck to pass under the log. About 10-yards downstream of this log a nasty surprise in the form of a BIG HOLE awaited the paddler still focusing on the log instead of the business at had.

About half way through the run, we rounded a gentle bend to find a distinct horizon line warning of the Class VI drop described in the guidebook. The Class VI rapid is actually a fish ladder consisting of 8 (or is that 9, Dave) consecutive manmade death traps dropping 13-15 vertical feet over 50-60 yards. Any one of these drops alone could be run with good downstream speed and a boof over the backwash, but with a string of multiple drops like this the probability for success was noticeably diminished. I would rank running this drop equivalent to playing Russian Roulette with a fully-loaded pistol and hoping for a misfire.

After the fish ladder the river's geology returned to a narrow basalt gorge for the remaining four mile run to the take-out. One rapid of note in this section is the Class IV+ "Rockgarden", a 100-150 yard long technical boulder garden which requires to the

paddler to effectively maneuver across the river from eddy-to-eddy in very heavy water to avoid numerous pinning opportunities, holes and other river hazards. We were going to bank scout his drop, but decided that we could eddy scout the whole thing after looking at it from river level at the top. Thus, the stage was set for some of our most exciting moments on this run. Dave and John ran ahead as the first pair through the course, as Doug and I waited in eddies upstream of the rapid. I started down before Doug and about half way through the rapid missed a midstream microeddy and ended up far right in this very picky, heavy water pinball machine. I recovered after about 10-20 yards and managed to work my way back on-line for the final drop missing a pretty nasty hole that would have eaten me for lunch had I stayed on the right side. Doug's run, from what I observed, was also pretty good except for a slight miscalculation along the river right side that resulted in a momentary pin, from which Doug recovered and after some hard work finished in style on the final drop.

Following Rockgarden the run returned to the nameless series of class III-IV drops preceding the final plunge into Punchbowl. At this point I decided to skip the last runnable drop underneath the takeout bridge, a long heavy water class III+ wave train, and the small takeout eddy and subsequent scramble up a rather steep cliff not more than 10-15 yards above Punchbowl Falls. My route consisted of scramble up a steep bank and a 100-yard carry through a depression between a Forest Service Road and the river bank that in places was swampy. Doug, David and John decided to run the drop below the bridge and had little difficulty in making the eddy and scrambling up the steep cliff back to the take-out.

As we concluded our run the clouds parted and while John and Doug ran the shuttle Dave and I enjoyed the sunshine and reflected on the beauty of the mountains and rivers in this part of the country and agreed that we would have to return. This brief respite from the rain also gave us an opportunity to see Mt. Hood in all of her splendor towering above the local landscape. This provided one of those "Kodak moments" that demands burning off 10-15 pictures at various shutter speeds and f-stops to make sure you get at least one good exposure. An additional stop on the way home was at the Columbia River's Bonneville Dam to visit the famous fish ladders and powerhouse. We were a little late to make the powerhouse tour, but we did get to see a few large salmon negotiate the fish ladder -- talk about "elevator moves" and "power upstream ferries"!!!!

25-April-1993

Canyon Creek (tributary to the North Fork of the Lewis in Lake Merwin, south of Mt. Saint Helens, WA), Upper Section from Twin Falls put-in to 1/4-mile above "Final Exam" rapid. Rating: Class IV+/V, several drops at Class IV+/V with Class VI consequences, gradient 80-100 fpm. Cool, low 50's, rain/drizzle estimated 1000-1500 cfs, water temperature 50's. Paddlers: Doug Smith, David Jordan, John Daffrion, and Michael Bullard Following our trip to the West Fork of the Hood, we returned to Portland and discussed paddling options for our last day in the area. Consultations with the guidebook identified Canyon Creek as the preferred creek run to top off our adventure in the Pacific Northwest. The guidebook identifies two sections for this stream, the upper section which we ran and is described herein, and the lower "Waterfalls" section which we looked at and decided to pass on at this water level after scouting several drops from a bridge located about 200 feet above the river canyon. Even from the bridge it was easy to see that the lower section at this water level was an endless series of back-to-back

Class IV+ and V/V+ rapids with small eddies, restricted river level vision, big waves, big drops and bigger holes that would be impossible or extremely difficult to portage. In short, the lower section didn't appear to offer the kind of experience we were looking for on our last day in the Northwest. We also had determined, based on the flow being at the top of the recommended guidebook range, that the upper section would likely be more demanding than the guidebook described and more attuned to our paddling goals. While at the takeout the rain intensified and temperatures cooled as I was thinking about ways to gracefully decline the run and spend a comfortable afternoon curled in my sleeping bag in the back of Doug's truck camper. Several good (valid) excuses came to mind such as:

A. "The additional rain will to make the river rise to levels above the recommended maximum and the guidebook cautions that this run's difficulty increases significantly at levels greater than the recommended maximum.....", or

B. "I was reading the River Safety Task Force Newsletter for 1989- 1991 and did you know that some of the leading factors contributing to white water accidents are paddling unfamiliar streams, high flows, cold water, cold weather, limited access for rescue .....", or

C. "If I don't boat, then we'll have the shuttle done at the end of the day and you can have dry clothes at the take out and we can get home sooner since we have to pack tonight ....."

On the way to the put in we stopped to scout Final Exam, located about 1/2 mile upstream of the take out, from an overlook about 250-300 feet above the river. The guidebook at normal levels calls this a solid class IV, but at this water level the rapid was clearly a 1/4 mile long class V+ with a couple hard to dodge offset holes that would easily hold multiple rafts and kayaks. It took me about 30 seconds to "scout" this and determine that the best route was to run the first drop to get past the entrance cliff, eddy behind an old car on river right, get out scramble up the steep bank and carry the last 375 yards of this monster to avoid a swim to the takeout. Doug, Dave and John took a little bit longer, but came to the same general conclusion.

After a short shuttle we arrived at a low bridge put-in for this run located just downstream of the Twin Falls drop. This drop consists of a 4-5 foot ledge and a 15-foot plunge into a big hole. The guide book indicated this drop had been pioneered in a raft at somewhat lower water levels, but we decided to pass and get on with our trip. I almost pulled one of the previously mentioned excuses out since the rain intensity had increased and the temperature was still quite cool, but Dave calmly looked me in the eye and said "you'll really regret it on the way home tomorrow if you don't run this river". So I saddled up and off we went.....

Within 100 yards of the put-in the river canyon narrowed significantly and the feeling of isolation from the world was more intense than that I experienced the day before on the Hood. The first mile and a half of this run consisted of Class III-III+ drops all boat scutable, for a paddler with a dependable eddy turn. By the first major drop, Wrap Rock, we had refined the "one boat in, one boat out" creek boater's protocol into a delicate ballet as we happily danced down the river. Wrap Rock, a 50-75 yard long technical Class IV, is preceded by a sharp bend to the right and the river's already steep gradient takes a noticeable downward turn. The steepened gradient and the river's bend severely restrict the view of the rapid and did not allow us to spot the next downstream

eddy from the eddy above the entrance. We scouted this drop by walking down a 4-foot diameter fallen spruce tree on river left and identified the crux move located about three quarters of the way down the drop --- the "wrap rock". This projection was located smack in the middle of an already narrow slot that all the river funneled through. The guidebook, I remembered, had not offered any suggestions other than advising the paddler to be ready to make a quick choice, but did not specify a side. Between the four of us, we tested the 4-5 foot width slots on both sides without difficulty. This is definitely not a place to be sideways in any craft.

The river gradient continued at the steepened rate and the rapids changed from Class III-III+ to constant Class III+-IV drops in a very constricted river bed with "edge effect" currents resulting from the 20-30 foot high basalt cliffs that ran to the river's edge. About 2- miles of intense paddling brought us to Marble Steps, a solid Class V+VI double drop with a terminal hole at the base of the last drop awaiting the paddler successful enough to negotiate the first ledge. We scouted this drop and then portaged by skidding our boats along the top of a well worn 4-foot diameter moss covered spruce which guarded the river left bank. We decided at lower water levels this drop would be runnable by cheating the top ledge on a strong right to left move and boofing over the hole on the left side of the lower ledge, but today the current was so swift the right to left cheat on the top ledge would likely end the paddler in the bottom hole sideways with no hope of escape....not a fun run!

The guide book had warned of a log jam located several hundred yards downstream of Marble Steps. With the river's serpentine course and the steep gradient this hazard was not visible from our portage vantage point, so we proceeded downstream with care through several Class III-IV drops until we spotted the debris dam. At this water level the log jam, consisting of three large logs reminded me of a clothes wringer on an old fashioned washing machine, in that the water flowed over the first log as a weir and then UNDER the second log and then back over the third log. A death trap, to be certain for the unsuspecting paddler. To make matters worse the river right eddy was only big enough for four boats and the cliffs on the river's edge gave us postage stamp areas on each side of the log jam from which to stage our portage. We formed an assembly line to work the boats over and through the accumulated debris to a staging area from which we could hand the boats over the final log mass to a paddler waiting on a small ledge several feet above the river. The paddler would then have to get in his boat while balanced on a two foot wide ledge and then roll off into the river. Needless to say this portage, while only about 30 yards long, was a major undertaking and took our group of four about 45 minutes to complete.

Once underway, we continued through about a mile and a half section of solid Class IV whitewater that required the paddler to boat scout all the major drops due to the vertical cliffs entering from river's edge. It was along this section that Dave noted the significant number of waterfalls that had entered the river from the cliffs doubling the river's flow from that at the put-in. The increased volume and the unrelenting gradient had made this section as challenging as the "Bastard to Lost-and-Found" section of the Upper Yough at 2.4 to 2.5 feet. As we were picking our way downstream from eddy to eddy I noticed Dave and John in a frantic upstream ferry to an eddy on river left. Figuring that something was wrong, I also started to move toward the left bank. It was good, because they had spotted a log (strainer) all the way across the river blocking downstream progress. The



river left side of the log was partially submerged with about an inch of water for 10-feet of its length before becoming fully exposed again as it spanned to the right bank. The scary part of this log was that along the right bank about 95% of the river's flow formed a huge suck hole that swirled under the log before bubbling up downstream. This must have been the drop that some paddlers at the take-out referred to as the "Limbo Log" which could be run at lower water levels on the right.

We were in a big mess now, because the "last chance" eddy we had chosen was located right above this strainer and the 20-foot riverside cliff was going to prevent a portage without doing some 5.10 climbing in wet suit booties on a moss covered rock face. While Dave, John and I sat in this eddy pondering our fate, Doug came careening around the bend almost oblivious to the hazard downstream. Our yelling and waving though caught his eye, but in the progress of making an upstream ferry above the suckhole his boat became stuck on a rock. Ever composed, Doug managed to maneuver off the rock and dig into the low end of our small eddy as I grabbed his bow loop and pulled him into safety. Several minutes of pondering our fate, Dave suggested to "just boof it" and off he went over the partially submerged part of the strainer and BINGO!, obstacle negotiated. Doug was next out but he started with a lower position and was not able to develop good speed prior to the log and stuck on the shallow spot with the suck hole's current tugging at his Corsica's stern. I thought he was going under and was already trying to figure out how we would conduct an extraction, but Doug literally clawed himself up onto the log and over into the pool below. With that example, John and I made sure we had good speed and a straight line when we boofed the log. We were fortunate here, had the flow been a little lower the boof move would not have been available and with 100% of the river's flow through the suckhole the cliffs stretching for several hundred yards downstream would have made any portage extremely difficult. Following another mile of Class IV pool and drop rapids the river widened and the cliffs receded from river's edge. The river changed into a run very similar to the Ocoee at 1600-1800 cfs. By now the river's flow had increased threefold from that at the put-in and the power of the holes and waves had increased proportionately. The cold water and intensity of the upper section had taken its toll and the group consensus was to take out about 300 yards above Final Exam and carry out to the road and hike the last 3/4-mile to the take-out and get our shuttle vehicle. Another two miles of fun Class III-IV paddling and we called it a day.

Looking back, Dave was right, I would have regretted not paddling this fine river -- not because of its difficulty, but for the isolated beauty of paddling through a basalt canyon surrounded by old growth spruce and fir forests, and of course the camaraderie that comes from paddling with a small group of friends. In retrospect, the whole trip was like this; in that, I could find whitewater boating in the Southeast of comparable difficulty, but the newness of the runs, the scenery and the camaraderie might be hard to match.

Dave, what about that return trip we were talking about.....?

*To contribute an article to the TEHCC News, contact the editor, Bob Tonnies, B-65, TED. All contributions should be received by the 15th of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter.*

**TERC HIKING & CANOEING CLUB**

**P.O. Box 511**  
**Kingsport, Tennessee 37662**