

The Bow and Stern

go with the flow...

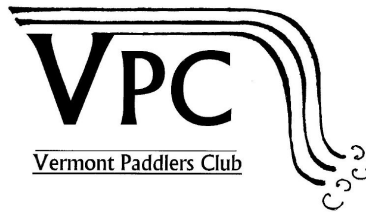


Newsletter of The Vermont Paddlers Club

in partnership with The American Canoe Association

December, 2017

Volume XLIII



November, 2017

Ladies, Gentlemen and Paddlers,

Hard to believe it's already November and the paddling season is nearly over. But I won't complain about what has felt like a pretty good season, with a solid spring, very wet summer and (for what felt like the first time in several years) and a proper fall paddling season.

Of course you can never complain about paddling in Vermont. I had the opportunity to paddle outside the northeast this fall and trips like that are always a reminder of just how nice Vermont paddlers are. Where else can you share an eddy with both a novice paddler and a local legend, and everyone will act like they've been paddling together for years?

The impending winter notwithstanding, there are still a few things going on:



General Meeting & Potluck

The VPC will be holding a general meeting and potluck on December 3, 2017, from 6-9 PM at the Williston Federated Church. In addition to general socializing and practice in the fine art of conversation, we'll be enjoying presentations by Clay Murphy about his paddling trip on Quebec's Magpie River and Ben Schott about his exploration of Cape Breton's mysterious Cheticamp River.

Board Elections

We'll also be electing the VPC's new Board of Directors. Before then, we'll need nominations. At this time, we know that our President, Vice-President, Secretary and At-Large member are all leaving their positions. If you are interested in helping not only run the VPC, but help shape what paddling in Vermont will look like over the next decade or so, please go to our nomination page at <http://vtpaddlers.net/index.php?id=28>.

Pool Sessions

We once again plan to offer pool sessions over the winter. These are great opportunities for both new and experienced paddlers to sharpen their skills during the frozen months. Dates will be determined over the course of the next month or so.

Access and Stewardship

Many of you are aware of the ongoing struggle with the Green River relicensing. Our appeal in Environmental Court has gone well so far. American Whitewater has by and large fought this for us, but needs support in this resource-intensive fight, or in their other dozen or so projects in the northeast. Join AW if you're able:

<https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/>

The Wrightsville Dam on the North Branch of the Winooski just outside of Montpelier has entered the relicensing process. A number of you already provided some very useful information about this river. We'll need more help as the process unfolds, including some dedicated local paddlers to help manage the process.

We also were dealt a tough hand at Sheldon Springs on the Missisquoi, with all releases between April 1 and June 15 cancelled for the foreseeable future, severely reducing opportunities to paddle this section of whitewater. We are still formulating a response but this is yet another reminder of the threat that whitewater paddling opportunities are under in Vermont.

Membership

Looking ahead to next year, please be sure to renew your VPC membership for 2018. Completely aside from the support your dues provide, our role in the paddling community is dependent on a large and dedicated membership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mike Mainer", is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mike Mainer

VPC President & Vermont Paddler

Who's Who in the VPC?

<p>President Mike Mainer 802-318-5790 mainer.michael@gmail.com</p> <p>Vice President Brock Richardson 802-654-8710 brockdrichardson@gmail.com</p> <p>Treasurer Hugh Pritchard 802-522-8403 Hugh.Pritchard@gmail.com</p> <p>Secretary Clay Murphy 802-999-4055 clay.c.murphy@gmail.com</p> <p>Agent Hugh Pritchard 802-522-8403 Hugh.Pritchard@gmail.com</p> <p>Education Chair Paul Carlile 802-658-6657 kanuboy@gsp.org</p>	<p>Activities Director Activities Director John Atherton 802-985-9970 johnjatherton@comcast.net</p> <p>Communication Director Catharine Hull 802-922-4406 chull.rn@gmail.com</p> <p>Director At-Large Chris Weed 802-863-2149 Chace.Rapid@Gmail.com</p> <p>Safety Director Ben Schott 617-530-0412 benjaminjamesschott@gmail.com</p> <p>Conservation Chair Michael Mainer 802-318-5790 mainer.michael@gmail.com</p> <p>Webmaster Tony Shaw 802-324-8497 boatful@comcast.net</p>
--	---

Website

<http://www.vtpaddlers.net>

Facebook

[https://www.facebook.com/Vermont-Paddlers- Club- 179111072106948/](https://www.facebook.com/Vermont-Paddlers-Club-179111072106948/)

Treasurer's Report, 7/25/2017

INCOME AND EXPENSES - Part Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Initial Balance	\$2,180	\$2,524	\$2,950	\$2,402	\$3,178
Dues	\$861	\$814	\$828	\$980	\$837
Subscriptions, Event Sponsorship, Donations	(\$525)	(\$395)	(\$888)	(\$445)	(\$125)
Scholarships		(\$100)			
Website		(\$153)			
Interest & Bank Fees		\$11	(\$100)	(\$36)	(\$39)
Meetings & Mailings	(\$361)	(\$124)	(\$366)	(\$98)	
Miscellaneous				\$162	
Rolling Sessions	(\$81)	(\$260)	(\$669)	\$73	(\$145)
Equipment	(\$40)	\$0	(\$160)		
Novice Clinic	\$407	\$644	\$767	\$135	\$1,095
Class 2 Clinic	\$103	\$225	\$45	\$5	
Net ACA Insurance Cost	(\$20)	(\$235)	(\$5)		
Net Income/Expenditure	\$344	\$427	(\$548)	\$776	\$1,624
Final Balance	\$2,524	\$2,950	\$2,402	\$3,178	\$4,802

Ice Breaker "Season Opener"

Saturday Feb 25, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan M, Dave P, Will S

Organizer: Ryan M

Difficulty: int-adv WW

Level: medium high

Gauge (cfs): 1800

Author: Ryan McCall

The snow is 4 feet deep and we should all be earning backcountry lines in the Mountains... But then everything goes soggy and rivers start popping ice and at 70 degrees, you know that the rivers are just going to be fun. What do you do....? Get in a boat on a good warm up river and get after it.

Dave called and said he was ready to get in his boat to start the season properly. However there was the caveat that he didn't want to do anything hard or serious because he hadn't creeked in close to 4 years. I suggested Stony Brook but there was too many ice bridges. So we aimed at a run we drive by regularly to get to other runs. Cox Brook has a nice collection of ledges and rapids and seems we always say so but are headed elsewhere. So we centered on Cox and picked up Will Seegers while we were at it.

Cox is one of the lower tributaries in the Dog River drainage and for a good put-in we thought just below the confluence with Devils Washbowl would make sense. On the scout to the put-in, we noticed that there were a few cows and a bull at the farm midway through the run, but the bull was tied up out front. We also made sure to get an eye on the bridge that is usually slung across the brook at this farm. It had been pulled for spring high water events. All clear other than the barbed wire we couldn't confirm was up or down...

At the put-in we all slid into the brook off of 3-4' high snow banks. The river was clear and flowing at a nice pace but not pushy (This would change by the end of the run). The ledges drops in the upper section of this run are clean and straightforward. You could usually drift up to the edge and then pick a line. We came across one river wide strainer that required a portage, but overall the brook was clean and fun up high and a good class II/III micro creek.

The last of the upper drops was slightly larger but dropped into the flatwater section that spanned the farm. We could see pretty far down stream that it was clear of barbed wire and as early observed the bridge was pulled for spring flows. As we were drifting through this section we all noticed a herd of cattle up next to the barn, but were chatting and enjoying the float. At some point Dave stated that the cows were showing interest in us floating through their pasture and leading the charge was a very LARGE bull (ring in nose and snot flying) as he was trotting toward us. Dave stated "That bull is VERY interested in us" and we started to really paddle away with some urgency. Dave then stated that I had better get a move on (even though I was in front) because I was in a red helmet, PFD and drysuit. I started to really churn away from the bull and Dave and Will, knowing that at any moment if that bull was really interested in taking me down, his 1000 lbs frame would plow through the little creek without a problem and he would have me stomped and gored in a second. Luckily, I think the bull was young and was not interested in trifling with the creek. He relented and we were floating away safely laughing nervously at each other. It couldn't



have been more than 2 seconds later and Dave screamed "Barbed Wire". I didn't even have a moment to think, it was at my back and I instinctively flipped hoping that there wasn't an additional strand under water. There wasn't and I rolled up with a brain freeze. Sheesh - talking about turning a class II run into Class V.

Another 100 yards and one of the neighbors was on the bank yelling at us that there was a dangerous waterfall around the bend. We knew there was a gorged in section of river below us, but none of us had ever seen it. Dave got out to scout and gave hand directions to Will and I and we ran a really fun 6' ledge into the gorge. It was clean just left of center and a blast.

From there down it was more swift water to a friends house that has a deck overlooking the brook. We got out and had some food and a beer. Below Ben's home, the river picks up in action and holds it on down to the Cox Brook falls (an old removed dam). This section is pretty fun and has bigger drops than the upper section. It is also stacked up a little more continuous. Other than one strainer which we could get over, it was clean too. The rapids directly in front of the old dam site looked like fun but they lead directly into a chocolate brown churning mess that dropped about 15 feet in stages and had numerous holes. It didn't look like any of it would be retentive, but a flip would be highly abusive! All three of us decided to walk the dam due to the increasing flow and manky looking rapid at the dam/falls. We put in below hoping to run the rapid below the RR bridge. Unluckily it had wood in both sides so we walked that too.

We took out at the Falls General Store and had some beer. Will realized he left his keys up in my truck so we didn't have a shuttle vehicle and I thumbed my way back up to the truck.

All in all it was a great season opener on a new creek. If you are just beginning to creek, this is a solid starter run other than the barbed wire and ornery bull!

Lower Mad

Sunday Apr 9, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Noel Bailey, Mike Beers, Jim Fecteau, Chris Frost, Nick Kovacs, Jim Poulin, Tony Shaw, Chris Weed

Open Canoe: Steve Melamed

Inflatable: Eric Bishop

Organizer: Tony Shaw

Difficulty: intermediate WW

Level: medium

Gauge (ft): 4.25

Gauge (cfs): 725

USGS Gauge Name/Link: [USGS 04288000 MAD RIVER NEAR MORETOWN, VT](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/vt/gage/04288000)

Author: Tony Shaw

This trip was scheduled for the Upper Mad, and trip reports from years past have us on the Upper Mad at flows as low as 750 cfs, though 1100 cfs is more of a medium level for the Warren to Waitsfield stretch. Not to be deterred, the Lower Mad is a nice consolation prize when the Upper Mad is off the table.

We let the day warm up, meeting at noon for a ~3 hour paddle - out long enough to get a sunburned nose if you (like me) forgot about sunscreen. When the day dawns below 20 degrees it is easy to forget the sun on April 9th is as hot and high overhead as it is on Labor Day. The level dipped below 700 cfs ever so briefly before turning upward again with melting snows higher up, and the mercury in Middlesex had reached 60 degrees by the time we took out. There were too few women on the trip - zero in fact - but otherwise it was an upbeat and handsome bunch. No one ran Horseshoe river-right, but the throw bags saw some action anyway, there and further down as well. In all, a very pleasurable knock-the-cobwebs-off season opener.

Shepard Brook, on our day off

Tuesday Apr 11, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Chris Weed, Jamie Dolan, Paul Carlile, Noel Bailey

Open Canoe: Tony Shaw, Steve Melamed

Inflatable: Eric Bishop

Organizer: Tony Shaw / Chris Weed

Difficulty: int-adv WW

Level: medium high

Gauge (ft): 5.74

Gauge (cfs): 2300

USGS Gauge Name/Link: [MAD RIVER NEAR MORETOWN, VT](#)

Author: Chris Weed

On April 6, one of us (Chris Weed) had been browsing the Mad River Valley on Google Maps, and noticed a stream that comes down along North Fayston Road, called **Shepard Brook**. In an email exchange that day it was discovered that Jim Fecteau had run it many years ago. When Jim was included, he replied with one sentence: "Yes, boulder garden and somewhat steep in spots with a smattering of waterfalls on the upper side of the run."

The following Sunday (4/9), Chris and Jim talked about it at the Lower Mad takeout. Later that afternoon, Chris drove up North Fayston Road to explore. When Tony proposed that I paddle something with him on his day off (Tuesday, 4/11) I got to thinking about Shepard and Mill Brook, which comes down along Route 17 (and is better known). Chris, Tony, and Eric carpooled early from Richmond to allow time for scoping out Shepard and possible put-in and takeout locations. It quickly became clear that the creek had plenty of water in it. It also became clear that the chances of encountering strainers was high. Exactly how high would soon become evident.

The takeout selected was a small bridge adjacent to a house just up from Route 100. The put-in options were by a bridge where Center Fayston Road crosses the brook, and farther up the mountain at the Hedgehog Trailhead (Big Basin Road). We tentatively chose the Center Fayston Road bridge to propose to the full group. It is 4.6 miles upstream of the takeout. The trailhead parking area is another 1.1 miles upstream.

With that assessment we headed back to Route 100 and up Route 17 to look at Mill Brook. We then headed back to the junction to meet the rest of the group at the Valero convenience store. The conclusion of the discussion was that Shepard Brook was too interesting to bypass, and might not be runnable after that week, whereas Mill Brook would be benefiting from ski trail runoff for some time. We organized the shuttle and headed for North Fayston Road.

After leaving vehicles on the shoulder near the takeout bridge we headed up to Center Fayston Road, which peels off where North Fayston Road ends. At the bridge we discussed whether to put in there or farther downstream at another bridge, where Airport Road crosses the stream. There was real trepidation about the speed of the flow and the lack of eddies, with the possibility of river-wide strainers on everyone's mind, but we decided to stick with the initial choice.

Within minutes after heading downstream, we encountered our first river-wide strainer (2 closely spaced logs) and had our first swim. By the time the situation was resolved, two members of the group (Steve and Eric) had elected to get off the river, head down to the next bridge, and assess what was to come. The remainder of us started a somewhat difficult hike in calf-deep snow on river-right, on what seemed to be an old logging road. Another river-wide log was visible downstream, followed by another. Most of us didn't consider putting on again until Jamie gave us the all-clear, after probing some distance downstream.

The brook at this point was little more than class 1, but was moving at a good pace. We were all on edge in anticipation of more strainers, but encountered none that forced us out of our boats until we arrived at the Airport Road bridge. By that time the gradient had markedly increased, and the whitewater was continuous class 2, shading into class 3.

Approaching the bridge, Steve and Eric signaled from shore that we need to pull out and do some scouting. The reason was another river-wide log, followed by a much bigger and more complicated assemblage of big logs farther downstream around the next bend, on the river right side of a long boulder/gravel bar. On river left was a yellow house. Its occupant came out to cheer us on. (We later discovered that he was the son of the owner, and the house was the former home of Rob and Kay Henry, founders of Mad River Canoe.)



It was becoming clear that the flow was increasing. This worked in our favor, because it produced a runnable flow on the river left side of the boulder bar that allowed us to sneak by the jumble of logs. Otherwise a portage would have been unavoidable.

At this point the gradient increased more. We were now in fast-moving class 3, with the same ever-present concern about wood. The next example was a large log suspended above a right-to-left bend, with a pourover on river left formed by another log mostly buried in gravel and cobblestones. The big log was high enough to run underneath, as long as one didn't get too far right. Behind the pourover was an eddy, where we gathered our wits for what would prove to be the most intense whitewater of the run—solid class 3 shading into class 4, with a flow of at least 700 cfs. During this sequence we had two more swims, which prompted the swimmers to end their runs. (One of them had taken a hard shot to the head in the initial capsize. Thank god for helmets!) The rest of us (the kayakers) finished out the run at the takeout bridge. It should be mentioned that near the finish was yet another river-wide tree with attached branches, mostly submerged, that provided a reasonably safe slot to pass through towards river-right. At lower water this might not have been an option.

Later examination of Shepard Brook's course on Google's terrain map indicated that it drops about 360 feet from the Center Fayston Road put-in, i.e., over a distance of 4.6 miles. Only about 60 of those feet occur in the first 1.75 miles or so, so the gradient in the remainder of the run is about 100 feet per mile.

Editor's note: Chris returned to the "scene of the crime" later in April at lower water with saw-in-hand, aiming to make the run safer if this group (or any group) of knuckleheads ends up back there on another high-water spring (or summer) day. Thanks (I think), Chris!

Cobb Brook

Tuesday Apr 11, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Scott, Mike

Organizer: Mike M

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium

Gauge (cfs): 180

Author: Mike M

The second week of April brought our first good round of true spring snowmelt. On the afternoon of the 11th folks were planning to hit Ridley. I wasn't too bitter about being stuck at work since I was pretty sure it'd be too high. But that means Cobb would be good and Scott was game to meet me there for an evening run. Of course this had me a little nervous - I think Cobb is sweet and all, but it's short - and Scott has run a lot of creeks in Vermont and had high standards. So I hoped he'd think the drive was worth it and headed for the takeout.

You can drop into Cobb from up top on Trapp Road, but I usually hike up river left from the bottom. The first few ledges you'll see aren't especially stacked but they look good, and Scott indicated he agreed. Then the gradient really takes off and by then I think Scott was pretty much sold. I think all total the creek drops around 200 feet in about a half mile.

I usually put in just a little ways below the primary confluence. You can go higher up but it gets pretty small pretty quick and is fairly dechannelized up there. Below the confluence, you get a few hundred feet of warm-up before the gradient really starts. It's all steep bedrock, pretty clean and well channelized, with enough (but just barely enough) eddies.



There is one marginal rapid here where you have to drive right across a shallow slide to avoid falling into a menacing crack. It looks like you'd still go through if you missed the line, but let's just say the Republican health care plan wouldn't pay to have your arms screwed back onto your shoulders.

There are a few other big drops down here too - one big chunky ledge where I landed in a pothole sideways and Scott briefly disappeared into a boat-width bedrock trough, another one that has a flake that could be a piton or could be a boof (hint - it's a great boof), and one final double drop with a surprisingly strong hole for a creek this small. Other than that there are a whole bunch of great small slides, ledge staircases and even one or two boulder gardens. Most of the drops aren't more than 5 feet tall, but most of them aren't more than 5 or 10 feet apart!

We hit the takeout right before it got too dark to paddle. I love timing a run like that!

White River - Stockbridge to Bethel

Saturday Apr 15, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Craig (CJ) Carline, Chris Frost, Chuck Malerich, Max Redman, Chris Weed

Open Canoe: Dan Mascoveta, Tony Shaw, Dan Webb

Organizer: Tony Shaw

Difficulty: novice WW

Level: medium

Gauge (ft): 7.25

Gauge (cfs): 4500

USGS Gauge Name/Link: [USGS 01144000](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/7/01144000)
[WHITE RIVER AT WEST HARTFORD, VT](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/7/01144000)

Author: Tony Shaw

One of the reasons I lead an early April Upper White River trip, year after year, is because this class II whitewater reach is a perennial favorite. This year, besides a few of the usual suspects, we had 2 Dans with whom I had never paddled, both in open



canoes and both jovial. And Max was along for the first time - to entertain us by leaving his mark on virtually ever splat rock he could find.

There was enough sunscreen to go around, and the brisk wind that blew was at our backs most of the way down the river, so we ended up making great time. We stopped at Dean's Corner above Gaysville for a lunch break - liquid and otherwise. I almost put Max's eye out when he peeled off a surf wave unaware that I was accelerating into the main channel just below him from a side chute after lunch. Aside from that one close call there were no mishaps or swims.

CJ recently moved to Bethel, so the White is very much his home river these days. He claims that since tropical storm Irene the couple of miles above Gaysville are so channelized that they can be run in the summer at much lower levels than would have been possible before that storm ravaged the river (and valley).

Chris Weed and I did a little road scouting up Locust Creek before the drive home that afternoon. The last couple miles of this creek look continuous, intermediate, and runnable, with the ledges beneath the Rt. 107 bridge being perhaps the most technical.

Paddling thru Middle Earth

Friday Apr 21, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan M, Dave P

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: low boatable

Gauge (cfs): 800

Author: Ryan McCall

Doesn't it always start with the question of where to go???? I know I feel like I never get it right when it's early season and I have no idea how to dial back my expectations and wide-eyed excitement. By 3pm though in April, you had better have a plan or you are going to run out of daylight. So after scouting every damn tributary between Patterson (The White) and Shepherd Brook in the Mad Valley, Dave and I decided to go somewhere that the geology made sense instead of following the USGS gauges. If it was gorged in then what little rain we got would make sense. Off we went to Flint. For an early season run it wouldn't hurt that it may be on the low side anyways.

We got over the Whopty-Doos on Roxbury Gap from the frost heaves and found Flint to be fully boatable from up high on down to the hard right hand turn w/o any portages. Winning!

Putting on up high have a few short rapids and eddy hopping to get us geared up for a pretty complex boulder/bedrock rapid. The water was medium low, so the pushiness was on the low side and you were able to link moves together.

This gorge is on par with being down in the Midd in places although not as committing, with higher water it definitely will stack up quickly and push you around corners. The run is almost exclusively bedrock slides and ledges in the same vein as Patterson only steeper and more continuous.

The biggest hazard on the river is the potential for wood off of the high walls and then at the end of the last straight away is a large multi drop waterfall that thus far has not been run and looks relatively terminal. You would really want to know where to take out above that so not to get flushed into it.

We wrapped up the run in the dark shy of the final straight away but plan to get back in there again in 2017 with some saws and boats to really get after it. Totally worth the effort if you are in Roxbury....

Joe's Brook

Saturday Apr 22, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Jamie Dolan, Scott Gilbert, Noah Greenstein, Chris Ingram, Mike Mainer, Dan Mayer, Ryan McCall, Jason McMullen, Noah Pollock, Neal Sandford, Will Seegers, Jordan Vickers

Open Canoe: Tony Shaw

Organizer: Tony Shaw

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium high

Author: Tony Shaw

On days like this one, Joe's Brook deserves (and gets) your full attention. The level was medium pushing medium-high. A smaller party hankering to run Joe's 4 days earlier met in West Danville and agreed the level that day was too stout, so we continued driving east to run the (easier) Moose River from Victory Bog to Concord. High water on Joe's is not for the faint-hearted, and I'm aware that Matt Young, Alden Bird, Scott Gilbert, and possibly others had survived high water runs earlier in April. Scott had warned of the occasional tree trunk or limb in the current to avoid, which is business as usual on seldom run steep creeks.

Though we were a big group - perhaps the biggest group ever to run Joe's - there were eddies (and routes) aplenty. The big slide above the covered bridge at Greenbank's Hollow was run successfully by everyone, but we all walked the long and merciless covered bridge drop, given that the river-right "sneak" route has a tree trunk in it near the top. The two mile long covered bridge section was well-padded and tempestuous. The one river-wide strainer Scott reported in the first big drop below the Morse's Mills bridge had (to our relief) flushed downstream enough to no longer require a portage. Gone too was the impassible ice bridge in the lower "mini" gorge,



opening that exciting stretch to the first descents of 2017. Those who ran the serpentine sluiceway of a rapid under the Brook Hill Rd. bridge put on an acrobatic show for those of us living vicariously on the banks, and no one got re-circ'ed in the river-left whirlpool at the bottom. Still, not a bad idea to have your throw bags ready here. I lost count of my swims at about 6, none of which were long or harrowing. Mainly I was getting upended when I'd crash into the big wall of water formed by holes below the steeper slides - always thankfully flushing gently out.

Ten miles, five hours, and 1000 vertical feet later we all washed up on shore at the VT 5 bridge wearing big grins - where cold beers were waiting. There was talk at one point of a Joe's weekend double-header, but 10 more miles on Joe's before Monday sounded overly ambitious. On top of which, a release on the Green River in Hyde Park VT was scheduled for Sunday.

The minutia: 118 cfs through the generator, 30 more cfs through the sluiceway, some ice still on the pond at a height of 5.2 feet, and the bladder partially deflated at 1.5 psi (spilling moderately). The 2 gauge rocks in

the water upstream of the powerhouse at the put-in were covered, but a boat going over them would probably scrape. Noah Pollock took lots of cool pictures.



Spring Green Release

Sunday Apr 23, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Lots

Open Canoe: A few

Organizer: The Tubes

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium

Author: Mike M

For our first Green release of 2017 we had uncharacteristically nice weather and a solid 1.3 tubes of water to play in. There wasn't a massive turnout - the Wells race was the same day - but we still had a few dozen folks and everyone who showed up got a really nice day on the water.

I hung around the takeout for a while getting folks set with parking (a huge thanks to Morrisville Auto for letting us park there, and for having an array of nicely-fixed-up 1980's-era

sedans and mid-range muscle cars for us to consider purchasing). After a while a particular group of troublemakers showed up and I decided to head up for a lap with them.

There was not much excitement our first lap. A few folks were here there first time, which is always fun since the river starts off steep and challenging, but quickly becomes very manageable. So it's fun to watch folks start off a little gripped and then relax and really start to enjoy things. Things are in great shape wood-wise. The big flows back at the end of February must have pushed a lot of the log-jams up and out. But some wood moved out of Young Buck, and the last drop isn't really as ponded up and is actually pretty nasty - we all walked but heard reports of one very sketchy run.

We got to the takeout and found Ryan and his PA buddies getting ready for a lap. We went back up and had another awesome lap. There was one minor incident at Lumberyard that actually turned into some great swiftwater rescue practice. And of course it was nice to actually paddle with the PA guys, being that they are basically legends in the VT boating scene.

So that was a nice Sunday on this classic river. The day finished with beers and good company in Morrisville. More please!

Midd Gorge in the Sun

Monday Apr 24, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan M, Jason M, Dan M

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: low boatable

Author: Ryan McCall

It was the end of the 9th annual PA to VT creeking extravaganza. Jason and Dan were on their way back home to PA so the standard is that I head south and snag a river with them on their way back. A lot of rivers had dropped out so we figured that the Middlebury Gorge would be a good option with the levels being reasonable.

We were right and once we got a look at the river we knew it was going to just be one of those amazing runs in an amazing place. For me it was the first time back in the Gorge since 2009 on an adventure with Packie, Russ Kelly and Marshall Pahl (two of those three don't even paddle anymore). The Sun was out, the temps were in the 70s and we had the river all to ourselves.

We opted for the non-committal route by lowering our boats in below Rebirth and running the lower rapids. They all went, but at this level we had some route finding to accomplish for clean passage. With as low as the water was, Tester was the only one that was REALLY hard to run cleanly and all three of us came super close to smashing our faces off of the sloper on river right. Your Mom was a mess and the lead in had a lot of FU rocks that would jostle your line, but it went as well. The last rapid was fun and channelized and if you picked the correct channel, you were in like Flynn.

All and all it was a befitting end to the weekend of boating (Flint, Joes, Green and Midd) and the 9th annual PA to VT event. Jason and Dan headed south and I did my best imitation of Steve McQueen up Route 100 to get back in time to coach the first soccer practice of the spring season...I was 5 minutes late!

Mill Brook, Brownsville to Windsor

Thursday Apr 27, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Allan Berggren, others

Organizer: Allan Berggren

Difficulty: int-adv WW

Level: low boatable

Gauge (ft): 3.76

Gauge (cfs): 700

USGS Gauge Name/Link: [BLACK RIVER AT NORTH SPRINGFIELD, VT](#)

Author: Allan Berggren

Caught Mill Brook at a minimal but manageable level. Starts with a 15 foot slide/falls, then a very pitchy 3-plus first quarter mile that evens out to long 2-plus staircases, with an overall 150 ft/mile descent into Windsor. No impassable trees. Lovely aquamarine (duh) water, interesting geological features, ferns, and moss. Obvious damage from Hurricane Irene: Washed out road, debris islands.

Runs only a few days per year, but well worth keeping an eye on for western NH, eastern VT paddlers.

Saranac River to Redford (#1)

Saturday Apr 29, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Chris Weed, Max Redman, Noel Bailey, Chris Frost, Ken Emery, John Atherton, Tony Shaw

Organizer: Chris Weed

Difficulty: int-adv WW

Level: medium

Gauge (ft): 4.9

Gauge (cfs): 1590

USGS Gauge Name/Link: [SARANAC RIVER AT PLATTSBURGH NY](#)

Author: Chris Weed

With the Adirondack snowmelt largely over, we did a first run of the season on [this section](#) of the Saranac at a medium to medium low level. A weather transition was under way as we traveled to Redford late on Saturday morning. By the time we reached the takeout at about 1:00 pm, it was sunny, windy, and warm (~72 F).

With 7 paddlers the logistics and shuttle took a while. In the middle of the process Max arrived at the put-in on Casey Road from an unexpected direction at just the right time, having traveled through New York from well to the south of Burlington. We ended up together on the riverbank at the end of the 150 yard put-in trail at about 3:00 pm.

4 of the 7 participants were new to the run (excluding Chris W., John, and Tony), and the level was perfect for it. As usual, things got really interesting at Tefft Pond Falls. At levels above 5.5 feet this had always been considered a mandatory portage, but Max and Noel scouted it and Max decided to run it left of center. He did it without mishap, reproducing Jamie Dolan's 4/17/2016 run of the falls, which is the only previous run I'm aware of.



A variety of lines were chosen on the big staircase rapid that comes up a few hundred yards downstream of the falls. There was one roll and one swim, the latter with a quick recovery. At 4.9 feet this succession of drops is much less intimidating than at 5.75 feet or above.

After that we had an extended period of enjoyable class 2/3 boogie water paddling, until we came to the last really significant drop, where the river splits around a small island (big enough to support a few small trees). Chris W. chose to just boat scout and run it, having done it 4 times since 2011. That wasn't the most prudent decision, with several others in the group unfamiliar with the drop. Tony brought some sobriety to the proceedings, and guided the shore scouting for Ken and Chris F., while Max, Noel, and John followed Chris W.'s lead. All ran it successfully, and Chris F. even punched the final hole against the right bank that we customarily avoid.

We were completing the final shuttle at dinnertime, with dusk not too far off. It's good to start this run by 2:00 pm if possible, even well after the switch to Daylight Savings Time. It was a great day. As I write this I'm hoping for a reprise on Saturday, May 27, with warmer water and leaves on the trees. We'll need rain for that, and it looks like we might get it.

Upper Pemi

Saturday Apr 29, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan M, Chris I, Noah, Neal S

Organizer: Ryan M

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium low

Author: Ryan McCall

Lots of snow was still left up high in the Whites and a sunny warm Saturday made a run to the Western slopes of the White Mountains a no brainer. The Upper Pemi was said to be in good shape with and it had been a hell of a long time since I had been on it. None of the other guys had ever been on it. We met in North Woodstock, grabbed an extra coffee and headed up Route 3 to set shuttle and suit up in the Hiking trail parking lot. Once we were up at the Basin the questions started from the tourists. Are you going to run that? What's it like down stream? Can you roll? Is there enough water?



All of us took some time looking at the move to get into the Basin. I knew I was going to run it before looking at it, knowing it is deep and is a one trick pony. Flop off with a huge sweep. To attempt to stay upright....Flipping is almost guaranteed and a quick roll in the slack water is easy. Of course that is exactly what happened to me and I was upright and paddling away. Neal did the same thing. Both Chris and Noah walked thinking it was looking a little too manky.

Next up was Mini Flume which required a look at the line. It also went cleanly off of the lead in tongue. Below that there was a few boulder rapids leading up to North Pole. We all walked it due to how much water was actually flowing under the boulders and of course the wood lodged just below it. Below the wood there is a fantastic slide that has a few entries that make it fun and mix up how you finish it. All ran it cleanly.

From there we had a lot of fun constricted bedrock rapids with potholes and ledges where you could really get into a rhythm. About the time we were leapfrogging each other and really syncing up, the Sentinel Bridge came into view and we could tell the river was dropping off into oblivion. I knew we had a few more progressions and then needed to eddy out on river right to avoid being sucked into "Wham Bam Thank you Mam". Wham is a lethal sieve that claimed one of us in 2011. That sieve was still present and as ugly as ever. Putting in below the sieve is an option so you can run the rest of the rapid into the gorge below. The portage is a royal PIA, but we all did it. After we had put in below, we all said we should have just run the bottom of the rapid.

Below Sentinel, the river really picks up steam and is pretty much continuous to the take out with a ton of beautiful pink bedrock slides and ledges. This may be the best stretch of whitewater in New England, aesthetically and quality. We had one mis-hap that resulted in a head shot and a swim, but all turned out well and we were back on the river floating toward the take out and beers.

We capped the day with Beers at the Woodstock Inn and Brewery. A great place to wrap up the day.

Mill Brook

Tuesday May 2, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Will P

K2: Jamie D

Organizer: Jamie

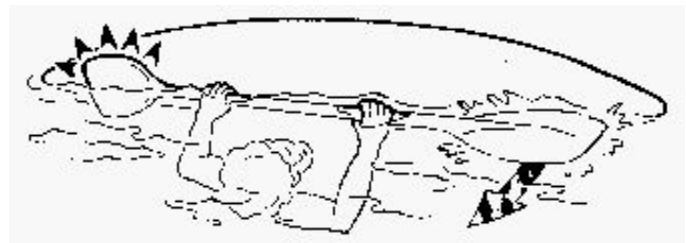
Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: low boatable

Author: Jamie Dolan

A few years back I had the chance to paddle the upper part of this creek. While a good time, particularly the scenery, it was fairly tame with a fair share of portaging over strainers. We stopped that evening when night fell and had a bit of a hike back to the cars. Today's run would be a bit different but some of the same.

Will said he had run this section tons while in college and had a fairly good idea of the lines (even after college parties and 10 or so years). Turns out, he did remember the lines pretty well. From the take out at Rte 2, the level looked to be low-boatable. It was low boatable. A nice level for an introductory run. We started out, following Dick Cheney's lead to an undisclosed location, about 1 ½ miles up Tarbox Road. It was a pull off on UVM land that had a path leading to a 10 minute walk down to the creek. We put in just after the first, of what would prove a half dozen or so blow downs. For the first 10 minutes of paddling it was more of a bog with a swift moving stream through it. And blow downs. We came to the first legitimate rapid / drop, an easy III but midway down we had to portage over a strainer. We quickly came up to the next drop and hey another blow down. This one was potentially doable but neither of us felt like this might be the best of ideas. From there down we pretty much only got out of the boat to scout. The next drop had a nice flake and small pool to drop into Will was very clear to stay center or left...yup, I ended up right. But no big deal. The wall was forgiving (Yeah). We quickly came up to the old dam, which we scouted. This IV drop is followed by boogie/II. In the middle of the boogie/II there was another blow down. As it was low, it was hard to get up speed to get a good boof off the rooster tail on the dam. But once again, it was forgiving. We had plenty of time to get out and avoid the blow down. As we went along there were plenty more blow downs which were manageable as they were in slack water where you could find alternatives (which generally involved pushing off with your hands). The remnants of Irene were still highly visible with at least two massive landslides still evident. The next to last drop was probably the most fun. A fairly clean 8-10 ft water fall into a nice pool. The last drop was a bit manky but doable even at low water. You kind of drop onto a ledge (well almost) nose first. There was enough water that we both managed to sort of slide, without damage, pretty much over it. After that we had a short paddle to the takeout and then we were done! Not a river that runs much but one I would definitely get back on given the opportunity. I should note that historically, some of the landowners were not too pleased with boaters about. We did not meet any and so cannot comment.



NBW with no one to share it with

Tuesday June 6, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan M

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium high

Author: Ryan

On my way home from work site visits up in Calais, the skies opened up and it rained like nobody's business for 2 hours. By the time it had ended nothing but the headwater streams were barely budging. I knew that in about an hour all local runs were going to be in the boatable range. Sending out a flurry of emails and texts to get folks to join me, I ultimately headed out by myself as is par for the course when you live on the east side of the Green Mountains. It was about 5:30 and we had ample daylight so I knew I was in no hurry to get down the river.....what river did I want to try this evening. Skies were breaking, a rainbow had popped out and it was 75 degrees. Dumb question - go straight to the NBW, Pass go and don't even wait to collect \$200...

As I drove up Route 12 the levels still looked low down around the village of Worcester, but boatable. Once up close to the Elmore line, the water pouring off of the rocks was pretty heavy and I knew that levels would rise while I was on the river. I took my time getting suited up and on the river. Once on the river I noticed right away that the levels were stout and likely higher than I had ever run the river solo.

Working my way down to Broken Falls the warm up ledges were fun and I was trying to get my head dialed in to what would be a pretty committing solo run. Broken falls was surging and the lines were undefined, but clean and padded. I just ran into it and kept on a right brace to the lip with a late boof. OK - I was skipping across the pool at the bottom and feeling as right as rain. Here we go.

The three sisters were up next and disappoint. The turtle boof was huge and fluffy and the flair was clean and deep. The third sister was fine and dandy as well and lead into the narrows which had a bunch of holes through it that aren't usually there. All good.

Fine Line - the first big vertical drops on the river was pushing pretty good and I decided to eddy out at the lip, great for getting a look not so great for setting up a fun line. All looked clean and I dropped into the trough on river right. That set me up for a huge auto boof. For a change I didn't rocket into the wall and it went well. Off to Manky Mank. I ran left lines on both of them and they were fairly padded out with out the usually crunch and smash that usually accompanies that rapid.

OK - Big Bouncy. I walked up and down it looking at the lines and how much the water was pushing. I seriously considered walking it a number of times because the level was high, but logically looking that the moves, I knew if I focused and made correct strokes I'd clean it and avoid the nightmare of the portage. I also thought of running it last fall on my head and how lucky I was not to get injured. There is a small window to hit at the lip that sets you up for the

final 20 feet and if you miss it you are going to get hosed. Getting to that window means cleanly navigating two 5 foot ledges with holes and a slide into a cross current before stroking hard to get left off of the prow and the final portion of BB. The ledges were fine and I actually hit them pretty hard to boof over the holes. The slide I was a little too far right and went deep but was able to crank my self left and hit the prow cleanly and make the bottom in fine shape. WHEW and WOO HOO!

On down to Flat Falls. At this level it is a fun and awesome boof off left center. 8 feet of airborne into fluff. Then around the bend on Sliding board (Stay Left!!!!) and eddy out and get a look at Double Drop... The whole sequence was clean and man was it pumping! Uh - the pillow fight was oh so good! Thinking this rapid may need a rename. How many frigging named "Double Drops" are there on rivers around here. From now on I am officially calling Double Drop "Pillow Fight"!

Next up - Cave Falls. What an amazing rapid this is. Maybe the most picturesque on the river. The entry offers up to options. The committing boof over the cave and hole or the slide on river right. Both land you in a mini chasm that you need to build up some speed to bust out of the hole at the bottom. AS big and fluffy as it has ever been and the slide to boof into the chasm was lubed up and super smooth. The 4 foot drop just beyond the exit hole was fun and the lip was clean.

The Last Drop - Visually the most committing with a 50 foot slide to a 12 foot lip. The drop is river wide and a bad line could mean a nasty piton at the bottom of the drop. My favorite line on river left has been closed out for 3 years with a huge tree and gnarly stump in it. Down the gut and get a huge stroke to clear the bottom ledge. On a high from just running the entire river on a beautiful night, I made the most of the remaining light and get back in the river above the drop and made a few strokes and envisioned the moves needed to get on the correct stream down the slide to hit my boof. Off I went, slid into the pillow and then let the current take me down the slide toward the lip, a hard reach for my toes, grab of the lip with the paddle blade and a vertical tug and pull knees to my ears. I was mid air wheelie'ing off the lip and on my way to a soft splashdown in the pool.

A clean run and a beautiful sky to hike back up Route 12 by myself in the dark. Not a single car passed me in either direction giving me the walk to soak in the experience, night and life. Man "it" can be so good sometimes!

VPC Novice Clinic 2017

Saturday-Sunday Jun 10-11, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Paul Carlile, John Atherton, Jamie Dolan, Mike Mainer, Chris Weed, Jim Poulin, Kyle Cahn, Nell Tshee, Steve Mann, Sandy Lord, Jeremy Cornwall, Alison Cornwall, Catherine Foley, Neil McCabe, Chris Brodeur, Thomas Bell, Terri Sherry

Open Canoe: Tony Telesco

Organizer: John Atherton

Difficulty: novice WW

Level: low boatable
Gauge (cfs): 300
Author: Paul Carlile

This year's novice clinic was a great time for everyone involved. We were fortunate to have good water levels, great weather, a very strong group of students, and as always great instructors and helpers.

Saturday started as usual with at the Waterbury reservoir. We flew through the flat water portion since everyone involved had a lot of flat water kayaking experience and many had been on moving water. As they have for many years, Eric Bishop and Barbara Frankowski set up lunch for us where we did the moving water / safety talk . We moved to the Middle Mad for the afternoon where we had a low but fluid level of 300 cfs - definitely enough water for first day novice clinic. We had a couple of close calls but ultimately no swims which is a first for me with Novice Clinic.

Since we had such a strong group with a successful Saturday run we decided to do the Lower Mad at 250 cfs for the Sunday portion. Everyone had great runs down the first 2 rapids and since it was hot day we had the opportunity to do swim and rope rescue practice at the last drop above 100B. When we got to Horseshoe we offered the more advanced students to put into the pool on the left side and run that drop. To our surprise, everyone ended up running it with only 1 swim with a quick rescue. We proceeded to the take out on the Winooski where Barb and Eric once again met us with lunch.

A few people needed to peel out but several of us took a second run. A fine finish to a great weekend.

Class II Clinic

Saturday-Sunday Jul 15-16, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Paul Carlile, Chris Weed, Sue Strang, Kerry Whalen, Chris Frost, Neil McCabe, Sandy Lord, Michelle Massa

Organizer: John Atherton

Difficulty: nov-int WW

Level: medium

Author: Paul Carlile

The 2017 Class II clinic was held July 15-16 on the Fife Brook section of the Deerfield in Mass. We had a small group of actual students with only 3 paddlers needing much instruction. In total we had a group of 9. We had a 2 beautiful days of paddling with only a little bit of rain Saturday evening. We camped at Woodford State Park in Vermont.

Stony Brook - Dave's Backyard Babe

Monday Jul 17, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan M, Dave P, Philip W

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium

Gauge (cfs): 2000

Author: Ryan

Dog river goes from 140 cfs to 2000 cfs. Grab boat and get there.... E'nuff said!

Warm water, good company, only two strainers, low consequences, miles of rapids and fun drops.... VT micro creeking at its finest.

Running late in Quebec

Saturday-Sunday Aug 12-13, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Adam, Culley, Jon, Greg, Mike

Organizer: Scattered thunderstorms

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: low boatable

Gauge (cfs): 1000

Author: Mike M

My normal summer paddling scheme is to spend every weekend (and a couple weekdays) in Quebec. That never happens, but some summers I've still done pretty well. This year a new job, moving and general life stuff had me occupied, and by the time I had a free weekend in July it looked like the water was gone - depressingly early. A good shot of rain in early August fixed that and on the evening of Friday the 11th five New Englanders were headed north hoping to snag one last bit of summertime Quebec whitewater.

On Saturday we did the Taureau. It was at a lowish level (-7"), what felt like 400 on the New Haven. The section down to the Launiere was a little bumpy but mostly fluid if you slowed down and picked clean lines, and all the main drops were great. Below the Launiere things juiced up a little and it felt like good, classic Quebec whitewater. Good fun but the low water definitely makes the lines tighter and opens up some real pinning hazards.

Still, the setting was unchanged from last year, or last century or last millennia, especially the deep canyons, massive wilderness and the thick black boreal forest that completely blocks out the outside world and leaves you with nothing but a river to paddle. The



whitewater here is definitely good, but the setting is what will make me go back for as long as I can.

On Sunday we did the Valin. This is another hour-plus north of the Taureau. It always has water, even during a drought, and was at a good low-side-of-medium, about 20 cms or 700 cfs. The first half is like the Bottom Moose with big bedrock rapids and a bit of flatwater, plus one fantastic 25-footer (class III). Then there is a portage and then a great canyon with steep whitewater the rest of the way. This lower section is about as good as it gets and ends in a huge, half-mile-long boulder garden. It's not difficult but it's big - take a big one from the Big Branch and scale it up by three - and you'll have the last half-mile of the Valin.

This in turn dumps you onto the Saguenay fjord, where we looked in vain for whales but settled for (much better) poutine. Still haven't found tourtiere there yet - I think you have to go farther north up towards the Mistassibi, which we should do next year!

Here's to many more great weekends of Quebec paddling.

Ottawa River

Friday-Monday September 1-4, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Jim, Brock, Sarah, Paul, Sue, Kyle, Rita, Boris, Sandy, Brian, Erin, Mike, Kyle

Doing Own Thing: Dawn, Barb, Christine, Amber, Kala the Mascot, Augie the Doggie, Navi the Speedy Pooch

Organizer: Jim Poulin

Difficulty: nov-int WW

Level: medium

Author: Jim Poulin

Seventeen hearty soles headed nord to the Ottawa whitewater region for a weekend of laughter, spills and chills. The Ottawa never disappoints.



Well, we have always wanted to come earlier in the year to catch the Ottawa at a higher level than our normal zero feet or below. This year the river gods helped us out and gave us a Labor Day weekend level of around 7 feet! So, this meant a couple of things. New lines on the Middle Channel (Little Trickle & Angel's Kiss) and no run down the Main Channel. On the positive side of the ledger, it was a pretty quiet river in terms of number of paddlers. Most of the big play features (Baby Face, Garberator and Pushbutton) were underwater at these levels and this kept many boaters away.

Friday September 1

For most it was a travel day. Some came after work, some spent the whole day traveling. The Cheese Heads had already been in camp for a week! I guess if you are going to drive that far, you should make the most of it!

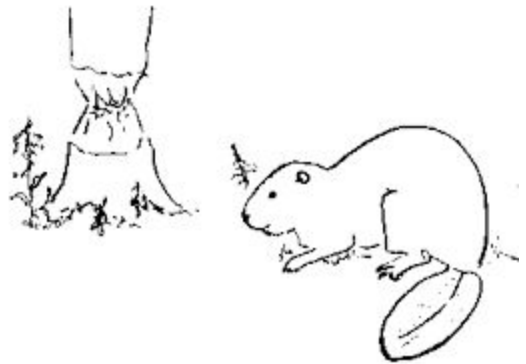
Sarah and Brock drove directly to the put in for a burner Middle run. When they encountered the higher level, they ran cautiously and walked around a few unknowns rather than take time for scouting (it was getting late in the day). All in all, a successful first run.

Saturday, September 2

River level: 6.75 feet

The gang's all here! The plan was to open with a Middle Channel run as we normally do. After listening to harrowing stories from the Cheese Heads about the Main, we were reconsidering if a Main Channel run would be in our afternoon plans. Didn't really matter because with all the scouting we needed to do and all the play that had to be done, we didn't get off the river until 4pm!

Saturday was our only sunny day. It struggled to reach 70 degrees but it was a nice day. The remainder of the weekend was intermittent showers and temps that stayed in the 50's. There were a few full dry suits sported by members of the group! The river temperature was balmy as always.



Sunday, September 3

River level: 6.70 feet

The group again voted for a Middle Channel run. Much less scouting but still plenty of play at the various locations – Corner Wave, (really baby) Baby Face, Angel's Kiss, Butterfly and Little No Name. At the end the Middle Channel, the group tried to determine a walking path to the Coliseum viewing stand on the Main Channel. With that resulting failure, we ended up paddling upstream to Black's Rapid and walked along the shore to the platform. For our efforts, we were treated to a high water Coli viewing! Big Kahuna was in full form and very hungry. We watched about a dozen raft attempt the run with about a 60% success rate. At the bottom of Coli there were a couple of motorized rafts to pick up casualties before they flushed over Dog Leg.

A right-down-the-middle run would have you hitting the huge Kahuna hole. Surviving that would allow you to charge through multiple other holes, exploding waves and swirlies that eat kayaks for lunch. There was a very doable far right sneak for those not wanting to get their heads ripped off.

There were rumors of our traditional Sunday Night Tequila Night happening. And given there were many empty tequila bottles on Monday morning, I must believe that would be true. But I don't remember any of it. That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

Monday, September 4

River level: 6.60 feet



Morning camp was a bit chaotic as some wanted to get going (long drive) and others were just waking up. But seven of us got on the river by 9:30. Maybe it was three days of paddling, maybe it was the cold weather, maybe it was the pushier water, just maybe it was the tequila,

but we had five swimmers out of our group of seven. Yikes! Plus an island paddle extraction that included two sets of ropes, a river fording and a rope return swim. That was an event!

Back to camp by 12:30 to finish the packing, say our goodbyes and hit the long road home.

Until next year!

Missisquoi #1

Saturday Sep 9, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Various persons

Organizer: Broken turbine

Difficulty: int-adv WW

Level: low boatable

Author: Mike M

Rain in early September brought levels back up and just a week after Beaverfest I was thinking about a Missisquoi release. As it turned out, Enel had to take a turbine off-line for repair, dumping an extra 800 cfs into the river and making for a very fun Saturday.

We had a modest level of around 1000 cfs... lowish but still fun. Per standard Missisquoi protocol, we did laps as a big group (numbering at least 10 people), and were pleasantly surprised to see a couple Quebec friends show up too. I don't remember how many laps we did... I think four as a group then Noah and I finished up with two more.

Most excitingly, I found a great new line through bottom of the S-Turn rapid that is really quite unique and amusing... in a good way! Don't be fooled by the run only being a mile long... there is a **lot** to do here.



Green River Release Fall 2017

Saturday Nov 18, 2017

Participants:

Kayak: Approx 40 boaters

Organizer: MWL

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: low boatable

Author: Ryan

Is it the last or not? That always seems to be the question when Morrisville Water and Light give the boating community a release out of the Green River Reservoir. With ongoing

disputes between State Agencies, the power company and boating community over a water quality certificate, there is no telling if there will ever be another release or if the dam/reservoir will even exist in a few years.

The above is a lot of pontification though and on 11/18 MWL opened up one of their tubes at the Green River Reservoir and put its full flow at the turbine's full generation into the river bed for whitewater enthusiasts to enjoy. The water was flowing by 10am and as I was driving away from the river as the last one up at the put in gathering my gear, there was still flow to boat in the river at 3:30.

I noticed plates from Maine, NH, CT, MA, NY and QC in addition to a bunch of the local crowd at the river. I also saw a ton of happy faces to be on the water and be on the water with friends from the Northeast. Expectations were set for a low water release and group after group hopped on the river for a run.

My first run of the day I had the pleasure of paddling with Brad C, Mainer and Phillip Williams. This was Phillip's first time on the Green and he even shuffled around his work schedule to get on it. We were the last to put on for Lap 1. I was in no rush and wanted to just feel out the river. Odd, I know, this is somewhere around the 45th time I've run this river. However, only have been in my boats 8 times in 2017. So Phillip, Mike and I put in below Moonshine for a mellower start to our day.

Right off we were all bopping through the squeeze point and working our way through the first several early rapids to the flats. The river was at a forgiving and easy flow. The rocks were less so. It's amazing what 2 inches on the river gauge will do to that river. 2'3" is heinous, 2'5" is considerably more fluid and 2'7" changes the river to a friendly non-boat braking run. We were in the realm of 2'3" to 2'5" and there was a lot of rock bashing early on.

Down to Humble Pie I could feel my gut tighten and mouth go dry. I've run this waterfall so many damn times and have had some gross swims in it. Today was not a day to swim, it was also not a day to try to pull off a flawless combat roll with a bunch of layers under my drysuit. A flip would be a PIA for sure, so I needed to be sure I was on line and had that boof stroke ready at the lip. Off I went and through the entry rapid. I was off on my strokes and had to stutter to get my boof stroke in where I needed it. I nailed it and didn't even get wet above my chest. I guess after enough runs I am starting to finally get it dialed.....MAYBE.

The rest of lap one went without incident other than I completely broke the bottom of my boat out on the last rapid. Serves me right for charging hard for the big boof on River right. I got my boof "good". But that came at the price of a HUGE smashed in hull and a funky crack that would need welded later.

We wrapped up and I probably had 20 gallons of water in the boat. A lot of folks were done and headed home. I was too. But for some reason I brought a second boat. The usual crew (Vickers, Schott, Mainer, Murphy and Crannell)was aiming at a second lap and poked at me to join them. It didn't really take a whole lot of convincing and before I knew it I was filling float bags in my SCUD. UGH, nothing like paddling a toaster down the river. Although the boat is more or less built for low volume abusive runs like the Green. It boofs just by thinking the word "boof" and can sneak in and out of eddies the size of your bathroom sink.

Lap two - it was cold and we were moving fast. I ran Moonshine right off - love that line and boof!!! Everything else went cleanly early in the run. Two of the group had pretty major cracks in their boats so they were springing through rapids and then dumping water. That made it easy for me to keep up in the SCUD. Mainer kept an eye on me though, knowing I'd goof up somewhere. I did in the double drop above Lumber Yard. That rapid at one tube is as hard as any rapid on the river. At 2 tubes it is a nice green tongue top to bottom.

Lumber yard was a walk due to low water and a tree in the line. The last few rapids including PITON all were a blast in the SCUD and we wrapped up pretty quickly. It was what may have been the last day in a boat of the season for me, so I was grateful to get that second lap in. I think all that were on the river that day were happy that we saw a release for the end of the year.

Off to the local watering hole at Lost Nation...

Thank you MWL and thank you Green River. See you in 2018.

