

The Bow and Stern

go with the flow...



Newsletter of The Vermont Paddlers Club
in partnership with The American Canoe Association

December, 2015

Volume XLII



Letter from El Presidente:

Fellow Paddlers,

With the first snowfall of 2015 sticking to my deck and seeing the amount of fall work yet to be done around my place, I'm tempted to say 2015's boating season is in the books. However, I know better. We had numerous days on the water last year in late October and November as well as some late December days too. Most of my letters to the club's constituency have on-water and off-water segments. My last letter to you from my current position on the board will be no different. This year marks my 4th year as the VPC's President and 8th consecutive year on the executive board. That is a long time, longer than one of my daughters has been alive.

The club's founding fathers created a policy that no board member could serve more than 2 consecutive 2 year terms in any of the executive board's positions. What a great idea and forethought. A club like this needs to be dynamic and fluid with new and fresh ideas to keep it relevant. I hope the last 4 years the club was and the board did what you felt was relevant to our boating community. If not, I ask that you let us know, become involved, and provide us with some guidance.

On Water

Mother Nature was sleepy this spring and was late to arrive after our robust winter. For most of us that didn't travel early season to find whitewater the second weekend in April was more or less the first on water weekend. Those that did travel headed down to WV for the 3rd annual Yankee Boater pilgrimage to Appalachia in March. It was the biggest yet and they had the pleasure of some pretty unprecedented flows. I've yet to join the fun, but those interested should touch base with Brock Richardson.

Folks that waited for local rivers to pop their ice were treated to a two day weekend release on the Green River to kick off the season here in VT. We had a substantial turnout with over 40 folks coming from all over New England, QC, PA and points south. The VPC New Haven Ledges Race also went off this year with much success. The race in its 7th year and 2nd as a VPC sanctioned vent was hugely successful with world class racers, top notch sponsors, perfect water levels and a great after party at the Schott abode. Every year the event seems to grow and improve.

Spring 2014 also yielded a few Missisquoi releases for the big-water denizens. Mike Mainer has really stepped up to the plate as the in-state coordinator for this regular go-to release. The VPC and AW have built a rapport with the folks at Enel Power to the point that the power company is contacting us to ask if we would like a release when they have excess flow. Our natural flow was not nearly as substantial as one would have thought with the considerable winter we had and by May we were in low water conditions. Bring on June and we set records for precipitation. My personal rain gauge in Montpelier recorded over 15 inches of rain in June alone and most of July was the same. Who argues with boating in Vermont in short sleeves and green leaves? There was close to two months that you could find something running any given day in warm temps.

We also had whitewater flow study for yet another potential boating location. This time it was on the Connecticut River in Bellows Falls. American Whitewater coordinated with Trans-Canada and provided a weekend of varied flows to determine viable flow rates

for recreational opportunities. It's amazing how many of these have come up over the last 5 years. With any luck all of these flow studies will amount to more whitewater opportunities for VT boaters.

The West River Release also happened this fall. It was abbreviated due to low water conditions at the Ball Mountain Dam giving us a single day release on the designated weekend was somewhat of a letdown, but numbers in attendance were up around 1500. With how fickle the weather was, the following weekend we got a 2 day release due to a full on storm days before. It's always good when the ACoE are willing to give us additional days of boating.

Off Water

There isn't much to report in the off-water section different than what I had provided last January. Below is a recap -

As in 2014, VPC has been highly involved in a large number of projects for 2015 that have great potential to come to fruition. These include... The FERC relicensing of the Trans-Canada dams along the Connecticut River, including the Wilder and Bellows Falls projects, have huge upside potential for boating opportunities. Again we are still involved with the FERC process for the Green River recreational releases and negotiations with the Feds. Things are moving forward with the VT-ANR water quality certification for the Morrisville Water and Light project. Morrisville Water and Light pulled their application to restart the clock on some key items then need to address, but as a boating community we are on track.

There is still forward progress with the West Releases, as well, with the Army Corps of Engineers. Working with VT-ANR is still a hurdle, but with a hydro power generating project being installed, we may actually see more boatable releases on this stretch.

The Montpelier Whitewater Park on the Winooski River project has taken a back burner due to political and fiscal reasons with the City of Montpelier, but it is definitely not dead. We are doing necessary background work so that the wheels are greased when this ramps back up.

2016 Dues

Our campaign to provide online dues renewal was a success – it's easy and fast to submit your dues this way and can be done by hitting the PAYPAL tab on the VPC website. If you still like to do this the tried and true way via a check, you can send it to Hugh Pritchard, VPC Treasurer, 37 Terrace Street, Montpelier, VT, 05602. Make checks to out to VPC. If you are not sure if you are paid up through 2013 a quick email to Hugh (hughpritchard@gmail.com) will get you the info you need.

Novice & Class II Whitewater Clinics

This season we tried a new approach to generating interest for our clinics. Front Porch Forums served as the shot in the arm that we needed. We had more response to our clinic announcements than I've seen ever in my tenure with the board. We also are looking at modifying our approach to clinics in general. Things like time commitment of a full weekend for students may be too much, kids specific clinics are looking more like they could be a hot item and offering more clinics throughout the summer are all on the table for

discussion. As 2015 is winding out and 2016 is just around the corner, think about what you want out of your boating club. Are there any changes that you would like to see made with the VPC? Are we serving your needs as a boater? What are we doing right? What are we doing wrong? This is the time of year to bring those items to your board, because let's face it, the VPC board is a bunch of boaters too and when the water is up, that's where they want be.

Lastly, it has been a pleasure to serve on the VPC board the last 8 years. I've made a lot of new friends, paddled a lot of new rivers and become part of a community that I'll always be involved with. See you on the river.....

Ryan McCall
Fellow Paddler

Who's Who in the VPC?

<p>President Ryan McCall 802-223-5986 ryanmtnman@gmail.com</p>	<p>Activities Director Chris Weed 802-264-3141 Chace.Rapid@Gmail.com</p>
<p>Vice President A J Seibel 802-473-0280 aj.seible@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Communication Director Catharine (Hull) Schott 802-922-4406 chull.rn@gmail.com</p>
<p>Treasurer Hugh Pritchard 802-522-8403 Hugh.Pritchard@gmail.com</p>	<p>Director At-Large John Atherton 985-9970 johnjatherton@comcast.net</p>
<p>Secretary Mike Mainer 802-318-5790 mainer.michael@gmail.com</p>	<p>Safety Director Ben Schott 617-530-0412 benjaminjamesschott@gmail.com</p>
<p>Agent Hugh Pritchard 802-522-8403 Hugh.Pritchard@gmail.com</p>	<p>Conservation Chair Ryan McCall 223-5986 ryanmtnman@gmail.com</p>
<p>Education Chair Paul Carlile 802-658-6657 kanuboy@gsp.org</p>	<p>Webmaster Tony Shaw 879-1655 boatful@comcast.net</p>

Website

<http://www.vtpaddlers.net>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Vermont-Paddlers-Club-179111072106948/>

**Treasurer's Report
2015 Interim Report 10/14/2015**

	2013	2014	2015
Initial Balance	\$2,180	\$2,524	\$2950
Dues	+861	+814	+731
Subscriptions & Events Sponsorships	-525	-395	-518
Scholarships		-100	
Website		-153	
Interest and Bank Fees		-11	-21
Meetings and Mailings	-361	-124	-212
Rolling Sessions	-81	-260	-669
Equipment	-40		
Novice Clinic	+407	+644	+767
Class 2 Clinic	+103	+225	+45
Net ACA Cost	-20	-235	-5
Net Income/Expenditure	+344	+427	+118
Final Balance	\$2,524	\$2,950	\$3,068



CLINICS

Novice Clinic

The 2015 Novice Clinic was held on June 13 and 14. We had a great group of 16 students and 10 volunteer instructors.

Saturday morning of the clinic was a classic start. It was a beautiful day as we outfitted boats. After the traditional baptism by wet exit we split into a few groups to cover basic strokes and boat control. This year we had young students ranging from ten to sixteen. Some smaller boats were provided by Sarah and friends. A great lunch by Barb and Eric was followed by the usual dry land talk. We had a lot of rain previous days and were fortunate to be able to use the Mad from below the Moretown gorge. It was nice to be on a smaller river than the tradition Winooski run. There were many good eddies with adjacent currents to practice on. We took out just above the weir where the online Mad River gauge is located.

On the second day, the Mad was too low but the Winooski was still too high so we opted for the Huntington. This presented some challenges with its more continuous nature but with a great bunch of instructors and safety boaters we got down the river quite well. It gave the students more of river trip experience which hopefully whet their appetites for more paddling. After the morning run and another great lunch, some of the group opted for a second more relaxed run.

Many of the group was finished by lunch. Kids did great and seemed to have a lot of fun.

Class II Clinic

Instructors: Paul C, John A, Jamie D, Tina S, Brock R, Chris W.

Students: Kim F, Boris G, Ben H, Nell I, Nick K, Chris Y, Ryan Z

The 2015 Class II clinic was held on the Fife Brook section of the Deerfield River on July 11 & 12. We had a group of 8 students and 6 instructors. Camping was at Woodford State Park just across the border in VT. Hangover helper provide a great start to the day as our students of all different skill levels tested themselves on the many different features. Moving down river there were some great eddy lines and small surf spots to practice on. Lunch at the railroad bridge was opportunity for students and instructors to do some surfing. Pinball provided some great eddy hopping practice with a few more surfs. As always Zoar Gap was an exciting finish to the day with a few swims but all in all an excellent job by the students.

Saturday night was a great time around the campfire recounting the events of the day and exchanging stories of other paddling adventures.

On Sunday, it was rinse and repeat. Everyone showed an improvement from the day before especially involving surfing below the railroad bridge. We had great weather all weekend.

TRIP REPORTS

WV Extravaganza - 2015

Friday-Saturday Mar 20-28, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: John Atherton, Paul Carlile, Sarah Cunningham, Jamie Dolan, Jim Fecteau, Catherine Hull, Mike Mainer, Jim Poulin, Ben Schott, Danny Siger, Jody Stillwell, Brock Richardson

Open Canoe: Tony Shaw

Doing Own Thing: Tina Scharf (birding, hiking, relaxing)

Organizer: Brock Richardson

Author: Brock Richardson

Most rivers on this trip were at a lower runnable level. The exception was the Cheat (Canyon) which was at a medium level. Saturday, our first day, the group ran the Lower Yough at 3.1 – a nice gentle level that allowed everyone to shake off the rust and get their boats under them. We met Danny there and it was great to have our trusted guide to show us down.

A man had gone over Ohiopyle Falls just above the put-in and a search was underway for his body. He had climbed over a railing to stand on some rocks for a photo. Unfortunately the rocks were covered in black ice and he slid to his death, once again proving the axiom that the most dangerous piece of equipment people carry with them is a camera. He was not a boater.

We were asked to keep a lookout for the body. Fortunately for our group but sadly for his friends and family we did not see anything. It was a stark reminder of the respect we all need to give the water.

Sunday the group split. The group I was in ran the North branch of the Potomac. A local boater friend of Sarah's by the name of Ned joined us. We had a great run and enjoyed the river at a bit under 1000 cfs. This is a nonstop class 3 with a couple easy 4's at the level we ran it. We shortened the trip by about two miles from last year by parking upstream of Kitzmiller and Ned showed us a much faster shuttle on the north side of the river. The other group ran the Lower Big Sandy with reports of good levels (5.8') and lots of fun, not the least of which was running 18 foot Wonder Falls.

Monday the whole group headed to the Middle Fork which runs into the Tygart. The weather was clear and comfortable and the water of the Middle fork was a beautiful shade of turquoise as we set out. The Middle Fork flows out of the unspoiled Audra State Park, then transports you still farther from civilization, slowly steepening and increasing in difficulty as it heads to the Tygart. About halfway in (after numerous swims) I realized I was in over my head. I said to Tony "you don't realize you're in over your head...until you are". About that time we encountered the hardest rapid of the trip. A scary pin/swim/pinned paddle sequence preceded my run. Ben was able to use his considerable skills to dislodge the paddle, and Sarah was unhurt. Then came Catharine, who ran the drop perfectly, so I decided to follow her line. Unfortunately I bounced off the pinning rock she

so neatly skirted and headed toward a badly undercut ledge. After a largely unsuccessful ferry I flipped/swam and my boat and I headed toward the ledge. I realized I was going into the undercut unless I did something, so I pushed my boat under the ledge with my feet and kept myself out.

The fun was just beginning. Tony bounced off the same rock and managed to run the lower section backwards. The group began to assess my pinned boat and although it looked barely pinned it refused to budge. Ben once again took charge and with the help of Catharine, Jim F., Jamie, and Paul managed to get a rope on it. Finally with three guys pulling for all they were worth from shore it came dislodged. It was great to have such a competent group there to help.

We headed on down and shortly afterward Mike Mainer and I had a life changing event. I was following Mike down a rapid when he became stuck between two rocks. Unfortunately I was a little close, due to missing the eddy at the top. I shouted a

warning to Mike as my boat slid across him, barely missing his head. It was at that moment that I think everyone in the group felt a transcendent energy as Mike realized the human contact he had eschewed his entire life (until that moment) was actually a beautiful thing. He told me after, that this moment of togetherness we shared was something he will long treasure. I think all who witnessed it were awestruck at the power of that human-to-bottom-of-kayak bond.

After swims too numerous to count, (17, actually, as Ben was only too happy to report), we arrived at the Tygart. Despite the railroad bed on river right, the confluence was a truly beautiful/remote spot. The bright blue of the Middle Fork slowly melded into the gray-green of the Tygart. The Tygart ended our creek-like run and kicked off the "big water" portion. Several big rapids and numerous small ones made for a fun yet tiring ending to the trip. The highlight for me was a run down a double drop that I would have walked, had we scouted it. The run was down a big wavy entrance followed by a six foot plunge into a froth pile. It was a great thrill to run it and watch as everyone else ran it – one of the few that everyone ran clean that day. The day ended at the Buckhannon confluence with a long carry/drag out on the RR tracks to the covered bridge.

Tuesday, John and I elected to take a day off. We headed out birding with Tina. The rest of the troop headed back to the Big Sandy, (now running 5.4'). We were regaled with pictures and tales of great flights at Wonder Falls, and all reports indicated it had been a stellar day.

Wednesday was Cheat Canyon. All who ran it had a fun day. Sarah and Ned (with Charlie Walbridge) ran the Big Sandy at minimal flow. Mainer's personal growth continued as he actually patted me on the shoulder and inquired as to my well-being after a swim. He allowed as Ben had informed him he needed to show more compassion. When I told him above the next rapid I was still scared and shaken up, we held hands and he offered to run the rapid holding my hand, but I decided it would be better if we paddled. Once again I think everyone in the group was stunned at the level of personal growth, not to mention



alcohol consumed, by Mike that day. Seriously, it was nice to actually approach the Canyon this year with less trepidation (as opposed to last year when I felt just lucky to get down it). For Vermonters the big water is something we don't get in our state, so it took some getting used to.

Thursday Catharine, Ben, and Mike put on their big boy (big girl) pants and met Danny at the Upper Yough. The highlight for everyone, other than Catharine, was her being stuck on the surf wave and her demonstration of proper windowshading technique. Sarah, Ned, and Charlie also ran the Upper that day.

The rest of us slid into our well worn training pants and headed to a new-to-us section of the Tygart, Arden to Big Cove. The majority of the run is road-side so we scouted as we went to the put-in. Tina ran shuttle for us and informed us (in no uncertain terms) that she was a shuttle moose or maybe an otter but in no way, shape, or form was she a shuttle bunny.

We met a local paddler Eric at the put-in who was putting on and waited to go down with us. Jay, another local paddler, came out from his house and gave us a run-down on all the rapids. He really wanted to paddle with us but he had had a root canal that day so he followed us down the river with his ATV and stopped at each rapid to tell us the line. Jamie and Eric ran Moats Falls and looked great. The level was low so the approach was difficult. We all walked some of the rapids and no one ran the class V falls at the end. The temps hit 71 degrees, but dropped quickly as a front went through.

Since the temps were dropping and Saturday's forecast was low of 18, high of 34, we elected to leave Friday. Mainer, Sarah, John, Paul and I headed for a quick Yough Loop run on the way home. It was cold and snowy as we put on. The run was uneventful other than when my paddle accidentally struck a rock and rolled me upright, just before what



promised to be a relaxing swim. I have been sucking at kayaking long enough that I know this does not bode well. If things like this keep happening, I may have to give up the sport and start sucking at something new.

Sun and warmth, great paddles, good times with friends both new and old. All in all, a great trip. Put West Virginia on your calendar for next year.

PA to VT Edition VIII

Saturday Apr 11, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan M, Jason M, Dan M

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: low boatable

Author: Ryan

Jason and Dan rolled in late the night before the spring Green Release. We got off to a late start so missed the crowds from early day on the Green. Sounds like they did a good bit of ice-breaking on the river. We waited for the sun to come out.

Green Release.....

The first drop - Moonshine - went without incident for Jason (Dan and I skipped it), as did the rest of the upper drops. Young Buck was socked in with ice so was closed out for the weekend. Old buck, Humble Pie, Do-si-do, and everything down to Lumber Yard was low in flow, but high in fun. Down to Lumber Yard - there was ice the regular line, so gave the right line a go - holy boat abuse. Jason ran the left, regular line and got hammered and went for a swim. Easy boat recovery and off we went through a couple of s-bends and then the manky little falls. This leads into Runway. The line of choice is down the left and off the lip for a super fun boof. The only problem is there is a massive ice bridge with all of the water going under it on that line. Jason was out in front and was barreling down that line. Like a cat he was out of his boat and clinging to a rock... PURE LUCK or athletic ability! Boat and boy was a-OK. Paddle not so much, so if you see an H2O paddle on the green with a silver bent shaft, give me a shout. We ripped on down to Piton with clean lines and Jason using his breakdown paddle.

That was just the beginning of the weekend.....

Mad above Warren

Saturday Apr 11, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Jamie Dolan

K2: Justin Worth

Organizer: Jamie Dolan

Difficulty: nov-int WW

Level: low boatable

Gauge (cfs): 800 - 900

Author: Jamie Dolan

We were in the mood for some exploring and that is what we did. Neither of us had been on the Upper Warren section of the Mad and so we decided to try it. Our information was that it would be good to go between 700 and 1,100 cfs. It turns out the our run was

done with the Moretown gauge running between 800 and 900 cfs. Italos turns out we both thought that was too low by probably a couple hundred cfs. Rivers change. We scrapped an awful lot and pushed off the bottom a couple of times too. We drove south on 100 and when the river was looking too closed in with snow we pulled over and dropped off the boats roadside so we could set shuttle. We continued driving south looking for a place to turn around. Within 100 yards we came to picnic area pull off. Okay, so we weren't feeling particularly bright about that. We dropped a car at an old Bobbin Mill where the Lincoln Brook joins the Mad. The run was about 3 miles total. After dropping the car at we went back to the boats a few easy drops downstream of the parking area. We didn't try to catch the first two drops as one was snow capped and the other wood choked. While not exactly a theme for the day we did end up carrying maybe six times due to snow / ice ledges / wood. Not too bad. The first drop should have been relatively straightforward but it was NOT. I got caught in an ice shelf. Though remaining upright the whole time, it was very unpleasant and a more than a little unnerving. Fortunately, I'm a "trainable" and I learned my lesson well. Justin found out how slightly undercut rocks are hard to lean into. It wasn't a good start for either of us. Throughout the ride we found lots of slightly undercut rocks (and tons of ice shelves that we avoided). The rest of the trip was mostly II maybe a couple of easy III's. Warren Falls was definitely not going to be run due to an ice bridge right at neck level just beyond the lip. There may have been a couple of III's that we had to walk around due to snow or wood. The only thing we saw of consequence was Warren Falls. So, not much of an adrenaline rush (other than the opening drop). But the woods and rocks/ledges we were around were definitely worth it, at the least for one round. And there were some interesting houses (huge) that we passed that were definitely not your McMansion.

White River - Stockbridge to Bethel

Saturday Apr 11, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Mark Cook, Chris Frost, Chris Weed, Lou Whittier, Brian Wilcock

Open Canoe: Tony Shaw

Inflatable: Eric Bishop

Organizer: Tony Shaw

Difficulty: nov-int WW

Level: medium

Gauge (ft): 6.63

Gauge (cfs): 3440

Author: Tony Shaw

I love this stretch of the White! Someday (I promise) I will organize an early April trip here and the temperature at the put-in won't be 41 degrees. But don't hold your breath...

With a relentless but favorable WNW tailwind, the 6.8 miles downriver from Stockbridge VT (Tweed River put-in, beside VT-100) to Bethel (VT-107 wayside take-out,

above the Fish Hatchery) went by quickly. It was Eric's maiden voyage in his "Thrill Seeker" (not to be confused with a "Duckie"). He will need a new PFD because the one he owns (long!) pushed up on either side of his head and helmet making him look all day like a turtle timidly peeking out from his shell. Aside from that, he looked ready for just about anything in his new "ride".

Thanks to a windy and warm Friday with some rain, the water level peaked early Saturday morning and was truly medium for our 12:45 put-in, a.k.a. purrrrrfect. Between rapids, the wind pushed us onward amid relaxed conversation. Sporty Class II is the allure of this stretch of the White, and today we had our choice of multiple routes through every rapid, shared big grins below the gargantuan wave train in the rapid above the Peavine Restaurant, and passed innumerable pourover rocks where one could spin/surf/play. However, the nip in the air kept our play to a minimum. Only one paddler swam, flipped by a reactionary wave in the beefier river left channel above the Gaysville bridge.

Even with a stop for lunch, the trip took just 2 hours and 45 minutes - some kind of record. The "afternoon breaks of sunshine" in the forecast arrived just in time for the drive home to Burlington, Barre, etc. It was 46 degrees. Oh, and, did I mention: I love this stretch of the White!

Northern Sampler...

Sunday Apr 12, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan M, Jason M, Dan M, Jamie D, Justin W, Chris I

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: low boatable

Author: Ryan

The Green was still running so seemed like the logical thing to get the day started. My group from Saturday met up with Ingram, Worth and Dolan. Time to get it on and 4 of us fired up Moonshine (my first go at it). Three of us cleaned it and one went deep with no boof - surprisingly hitting nothing. The group worked and poked our way down through the rapids walking The ice locked Young Buck and all firing off of Humble pie. The remainder of the run went well also with no incident, lost gear or swims. The level was up around 2'4". It's amazing what two inches in the gauge for that river will do. It was still silly low, but much more forgiving from the rocky nonsense.

Next Jason, Dan and I scoped out Waterman's to see the level (too low), so we beat feet to the NBL slides and had a quick run of them. Low level, but fluid, made for a nice splash in the sun.

Headed back to Montpelier, I wanted to check to see if the NBW was up and running.....BINGO it was at bare minimum and was mildly constricted with ice, so the lines were fluid. We picked off the season opener on the NBW. It was unreal how much snow was still on the ground in there and just how damn pretty that run is dressed in whites.

North Branch of the Lamoille

Sunday Apr 12, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Paul Carlile, Jim Fecteau, Max McGregor

Organizer: Paul Carlile

Difficulty: intermediate WW

Level: medium low

Gauge (cfs): 1400

Author: Paul Carlile

A beautiful sunny day and the first real paddling weekend of the season brought out a group of 3 paddlers. New to area Max McGregor joined Jim Fecteau and myself for run down this Northern Vermont jewel. Due to a mix up in meeting time, Jim and I had time to scout the Waterville ledges while waiting for Max. We agreed the ledges needed a little more water but it was sunny day with plenty of snow up high which promised more water as the day went on. We put in at the school as the upper section would have been too scrapey. There was ice that blocked only a few of the side routes but the main channel had no ice that came into play. The water was crystal clear and we had a blast paddling the gorge section. The gauge was at 1-3/4 when we passed it; low but fluid.

By the time we got to the ledges there was indeed enough water. We took our time scouting three of the drops. Though there were a couple of scarey lines inadvertently taken, we ultimately had a great run and a fitting end to a beautiful day.



Lower New Haven

Wednesday Apr 15, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: John Atherton, Paul Carlile, Max MacGregor, Jody Stilwell, Chris Weed, Justin Worth

Open Canoe: Tony Shaw

Inflatable: Eric Bishop

Organizer: Jamie Dolan

Difficulty: intermediate WW

Level: medium

Author: Jody Stilwell

We were gifted with a bluebird day with temps in the 60's. After a lull in water mid morning, the level rebounded nicely to a fluffy medium. Prior to consulting the 'Rock of Gauge', experts place the level at or around 800-1200 cfs.

8 craft took to the water at 5:30 pm, made up of the open boat stylings of Tony Shaw, Eric atop an IK and 6 random kayakers. The energy was good for the first rapid, preceding the mandatory portage/wormy dog shuffle to avoid the log jam above the confluence with Baldwin Cr. Sidenote: anyone with free time between runs on Saturday is urged to bring a chainsaw and work out any extra energy on that pile(one channel will do).

The river provided plenty of fluff through the boulder strewn run and our group held good lines, including at the rapid with no name above the new bridge. Line choice was varied, the water level gave us options seldom seen. Center tongue was popular choice, with Chris's door #2, no, door #1 line providing the most excitement.

The paddle, approximately 2 hours of smiles and laughter, ended with a takeout situation that was hard to beat. I'll not mention the size of Max's carbon footprint. If further information is desired about the takeout , just let me know and I'll meet you at the putin. See we you on the water.

New Haven Ledges Race

Saturday Apr 18, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: New England Boaters

Organizer: Vermont Paddlers Club

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium

Gauge (cfs): 600

Author: Ryan

I've had close to 3 weeks to reflect on the New Haven Ledges Race. What is it about the Ledges Race that keeps bringing boaters back year after year to compete? What is it about this race that draws in new competitors every year? Why does the buzz about this event amongst local Vermonter boaters start up while our beloved New Haven Ledges is under feet of snow and ice? Why do friends and acquaintances, who don't even boat, start to ask me when the Ledges Race will take place even before there are regular glimpses of whitewater boats on car roofs zipping around the Vermont countryside? These questions and more have been rattling around in my head for close to 3 weeks....



We have been putting this event on for 7 years. Yes, 7 years! I remember the first year the race took place in 2009. I was asked by the race organizers Ben Guttridge and Dave Packie, if I'd be willing to head over to the Ledges to help out with safety for a grassroots creek race on the Ledges. They figured a few

UVM kids and maybe folks who lived near the Ledges would show up for a chance at bragging rights as having the fastest time down the stretch of river. Those two guys were dead on right. What they didn't figure was a lot more people wanted to test their mettle on the Ledges than they expected.

Not a whole lot has changed. We've mucked around with the format a few times, made it more spectator friendly, and tried to make it more of a corporate sort of event with big money prizes and signature sponsors. We've even had a full shift in the primary organizing club, moving from the University of Vermont Kayak Club to it's now being under the guise of the Vermont Paddlers Club. What hasn't changed with this event; however, is the very reason for it...the boaters! Yes, the folks who come out to race each year. Shocker, right? I can name each and every one of them by their first name. I've boated with most of them, whether they are from VT, NY, NH, ME, MA, or as far south as PA and north as QC. These boaters get together on a day in April to hang out with friends and boat laps on the New Haven Ledges. Some of the boaters actually go fast. Some of them try to go fast. Others aren't even trying to race, they are just spending time amongst it.

The Ledges section of the New Haven River really lends itself to an event like this too. There are six high quality rapids (Roadside, Secret Compartment, The Ledges, Oh By The Way, Rooster Tail and Toaster) that rate out between class 4 and 5 with lots of 3+ high quality boogie in between to keep things interesting. Also keeping the racers on their toes are the annual changes of the New Haven's bed formation. The crux of the run can be Rooster Tail one year, while the next it is Oh By The Way, or Secret Compartment. Levels on the river the day of the race also play into the times the participants get for their two race laps. As we all know, there are a few boaters out there who thrive in ELF conditions. Of course there are big water guys (and gals) who really like the run juiced up.

This year we had a level that was about as good as it gets to keep boaters from both camps happy, with a forgiving, but fluid, level. We were at the front end of the snow melt and had not seen any rain on snow events to really get the melt started. But we were graced with a week of temps in the 70s, resulting in the level being up around 1000 cfs the Friday before the race... It cooled off that night to drop the level into the 600 cfs range. With race day in the 60s, plenty of sunshine, and the snow on Mt Abe above

CREEK BOAT			CREEK BOAT		
PLACE	NAME	TIME	PLACE	NAME	TIME
1	J Beckwith	0:04:04	21	M Mainer	0:04:57
2	R Brown	0:04:11	22	R Paulsen	0:04:59
3	C Brown	0:04:13	23	C Clark	0:05:01
4	M Young	0:04:26	24	C Murphy	0:05:08
4	S Clermont	0:04:26	24	A Wagner	0:05:08
6	M McVey	0:04:28	26	J Crannell	0:05:11
7	C Laird	0:04:31	27	C Hull	0:05:32
8	B Schott	0:04:32	28	K Kostyu	0:05:36
9	V Major	0:04:33	29	Q Hershey	0:05:38
10	H Pritchard	0:04:34	30	M Feehelay	0:05:49
10	N Gottlieb	0:04:34	31	S Andrews	0:05:50
10	A Toth	0:04:34	32	N Sandford	0:06:10
13	J Vickers	0:04:38	33	J Strain	0:06:23
14	J Sandford	0:04:40	34	E Ludlow	0:06:45
14	C Thomas	0:04:40	35	S Lincoln	0:07:00
16	M Flynn	0:04:42	36	G Panlevey	DNF
17	E Adsit	0:04:44	36	D Scavone	DNF
17	M Paleio	0:04:44	36	R Lane	DNF
19	T Krammen	0:04:46	36	L Bernier	DNF
20	R Timpson	0:04:56			
LONG BOAT					
PLACE	NAME	TIME			
1	J Beckwith	0:04:15			
2	H Pritchard	0:04:40			
3	B Schott	0:04:41			

Lincoln, VT giving us just enough melt to keep our levels steady in the 600 cfs range, things were.... PERFECT. Perfect for the spectators too. They had lots of great opportunity to find a spot, soak in the sun, and catch great racing action and even some pretty good carnage.

Overall, the race went off without a hitch. Without a hitch to a race coordinator is considerably different than what a participant would say, but I think I can cover both bases here. The weather was brilliant, the flow was perfect, we had no incidents or accidents to report, and I think everyone had a good time. One of those things that goes into a top notch event is the sponsorship. It really puts the icing on the cake. Most of our sponsors have been with us for years and without them the Ledges Race is really just another day on the river for the boaters... Like I said, our racers come to this event for the low key grassroots atmosphere, but they also all come hoping to win the chance at a prize or at the very least smoke their regular paddling partner's time. So more than just touting our sponsors' products, I really want to say they help our event to be success and to build the VT boating community. We did something different with our sponsorship this year, pooling our local VT sponsors and asked for cash support in order to provide race bibs for our event. Without the generosity of the Vermont Paddlers Club, Otter Creek Brewing, and IBEX we'd still be using a grease pencil to write the race numbers on the racer's boats. A big thank you to these sponsors for funding our bibs and adding a level of legitimacy to the race. Our prize sponsors this year looked a lot like they have in the past and we really thank them for their loyalty to VT's spring classic. Our perennial sponsors have been keeping us going for years with fantastic products. – Thank you to Shred Ready, Mountain Khaki, Liquid Logic Kayaks, Werner Paddles, Astral Buoyancy, and Five Ten. They were all as generous as ever! New to our list of sponsors was Stohlquist, Dublin Dog, and Watershed Dry Bags. It was fantastic to have these new sponsors at the table and the racers were really stoked with the prizes we had from them. THANKS to all of our sponsors – you all keep us honest and the racers paddling harder!

The winners... everyone was a winner on April 18th! However those who paddled the fastest were, in this order,... Justin Beckwith, pushing the elusive sub 4 minute time, came in at 4:04. His 3rd overall win in the 7 years the race has been held. The Brown brothers pulled 2nd and 3rd. Rogan in at 4:11 and Culley at 4:13 (nothing like some family competition). For the women, budding creeker Catharine Hull smoked in a time of 5:32.

Back to the questions I posed at the beginning of this year's race wrap up... I'm not going to answer those for you here. Come talk to me on the river or better yet, come see me next April in Bristol, VT where I'll be saying 1, 2, 3.....GO, sending 50 of my best friends down the start ramp and on their way down the New Haven Ledges and off Toaster. You'll see it for yourself.....

Lewis Creek

Saturday Apr 18, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Nick Kovacks

Open Canoe: Tony Shaw

Inflatable: Eric Bishop

Organizer: Tony Shaw

Difficulty: novice WW

Level: medium low
Gauge (ft): 2.9
Gauge (cfs): 250
Author: Tony Shaw

The fishermen and women out-numbered the paddlers today on Lewis Creek, but I'm pretty certain the paddlers were having more fun. The three of us put on a good show for them at the series of high, sloping ledges in North Ferrisburgh, where a downed tree in the river-left current at the bottom forced us to go either center or right - scraping some as we went. The hydraulic on river left there at the bottom was looking none too friendly either (but then, it never does). The rapids, aside from the (optional) narrow slot east of the Prindle Corners Covered Bridge (III) and the falls in North Ferrisburgh (IV), are predominantly class I-II. After scouting, we all lifted over the lamprey interdiction dam in the upper section, with ease.

The banks and the woods beyond are for the most part unspoiled, and lovely. We heard peepers, saw some beautiful wood ducks, red tailed hawks, and a big bard owl en route to our take-out at the old RR bridge abutment west of US7. Nick had some trouble above the Quinlans Covered Bridge when he (and Eric) attempted the more technical left side of the island and Nick got tangled up with some tree branches that were blocking the current. It all turned out fine.

The temperatures dropped from the 60's into the 50's after a little squall passed through about the time we put in, but the sun came back out for the last half of the run and it felt super. I know Lewis Creek can be run at lower water levels, but as it was I thought we did our fair share of scraping today - medium low is what I think you'd have to call it. Just under 3 hours, on the water. Nice.

Joe's Brook

Sunday Apr 19, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Sarah C; Tad M; Jamie D

Open Canoe: Tony S

Inflatable: Eric B

Organizer: Jamie Dolan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: high

Author: Jamie Dolan

It had the makings of a wonderful day. Five experienced paddlers on a sunny day on Joe's Brook. Well, it was a wonderful day but not as first imagined. The water was at a stout level. Water was flowing well over the gauge rock and the turbines adding their share. We encountered wood from the get go. Mainly trees bowing in the river that we were able to paddle around or through. But there was also plenty of random logs in the water. There also were plenty of ice shelves. The first rapid, island rapid, had a healthy combination of both, with a fair amount of water juicing it (there was no island at this level). Nothing too hard but consequences (ice shelves) could be vexing. Tony was particularly concerned

with the ice shelves. While I ran it without mishap it apparently did not inspire any confidence. All others decided to walk. Island rapid is quickly followed by S turn (where we had to portage last year due to wood). Oddly enough, this river trip got interesting on the portage.

I was on river left waiting for others to get back on. Eric was the first to come over and indicated he had his fun factor filled for the day. He was ready to walk out. The river was much higher than he had ever run it and he was in a new boat that he was still getting used to. Again, Eric and I were on river left, everyone else on river right. Tony indicated (I thought) he and Tad were ready to call it a day and were going to walk out river right. I relayed this to Eric (on river left) and he decided to crest the steep bank and put in the class II downstream to cross over and join Tony and Tad. During this Sarah lost her boat into the river while she was portaging. She lost her grip on it while trying to climb the steep uphill on river right. I saw it float past but wasn't able to help as I was out of my boat. Sarah got my attention and indicated she was off on boat retrieval. We were now five people in four different places, none within sight of the other. Nice! Suffice it to say we eventually regrouped, retrieved her boat from the middle of the river (class II rapids), walked the next two drops (the three foot ledge and a small slide) and took out at the first bridge we came to. While Tony was particularly interested in going on to the covered bridge (two more significant rapids) where we had left a car, we called it a day. We had gone maybe three miles in 2 1/2 hours. Paraphrasing Sarah "We used a lot of skills that day though paddling wasn't really one of them".

Guerrilla Mill Brook - Jericho

Tuesday Apr 21, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: John Atherton, Paul Carlile, Jamie Dolan, Jody Stilwell, Justin Worth

Open Canoe: Tony Shaw

Organizer: John and Jamie

Difficulty: intermediate WW

Level: medium high

Author: Tony Shaw

After a full day of rain Monday and more on Tuesday (through noon and beyond), we agreed the steep 1/2 mile of the Browns River below Old Pump Rd. would be prime for an after work outing. So at 5pm, I met JAMIE, JODY, JOHN, and JUSTIN for a JOLLY JAUNT in JERICO. If only JIM had showed up it would have been some kind of harmonic convergence. But PAUL showed up instead, and things went downhill from there. Well, sort of. I suggested we drive up to scout the big drop below the OPR bridge. I have never run this stretch at such a high level, and the way the water was surging and swirling and reflecting off the rock walls at the hole half-way down made most everyone queasy. By this time it was getting close to 6 pm, and with no other class III options in close proximity the group drove over to Barber Farm Rd. to set shuttle at the VT 117 bridge to run Mill Brook in Jericho. Since Tropical Storm Irene, Mill Brook has been virtually unrun, due to landslides into the river in at least 2 places leaving behind a jumble of trees in both

cases. Even before Irene, Mill Brook had a reputation for sporting big wood in inconvenient places.

With all the water in the brook this afternoon, we were able to put-in way up on Nashville Rd., a hundred yards above the big waterfall "that nobody runs". Our better judgement was to leave it that way, at least for this day, and we carried around on the left or the right. A route certainly exists for running this falls, bouncing down the far right side, or perhaps even the far left.

From there down to Fitzsimonds Rd., where we called the trip on account of darkness, one encounters seemingly endless class II rapids with one short III just below the Field Rd. bridge, but there is a ton of wood in the river. More specifically, there are tons and tons of wood in the river. Thankfully, we were an experienced, nimble, and good-spirited group, able to size up the hazards, lift or boof over several of the logs, and make quick carries where that was impossible.

I was having a really good time, with something new to contend with around each blind corner. That said, this type of run is certainly not for everyone. My feet are still sore from the mile plus walk up Browns Trace and down Tarbox Rd. to where we had left our nearest shuttle vehicle. It was close to 9pm, and pitch dark, by the time the last of the boats was loaded and we all headed for home.

North Branch of the Lamoille

Saturday Apr 25, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Paul Carlile, Chris Weed, Jamie Dolan, Jim Poulin

Open Canoe: Tony Shaw

Organizer: Paul Carlile

Difficulty: intermediate WW

Level: low boatable

Gauge (ft): 1200

Author: Paul Carlile

The trip schedule called for the Lower New Haven, which is always a bit of crap shoot, but too low for this day. After a bit of discussion we settled on North Branch of the Lamoille. It was a cool day (40 degrees) and as we approached we saw snow Waterville we saw snow up in the mountains, we wondered if maybe John had made the right call to go skiing today. The gauge was sitting at the line below 2 ft (call it 1.5). Although, cloudy and cool the gorge was beautiful as always. No drama through the gorge as the 5 of us picked our way down hitting the occasional rock but it was largely fluid.



Running the first drop of the Waterville ledges found each of us getting hung at the top as the left hand slide was not particularly fluid and most of the water was flowing to the right. Ultimately, we all ran cleanly. The rest of ledges ran cleanly with only the occasional snagged rock. We stopped at the bottom island to scout the left channel. As rumoured the first drop on the left side looked a bit nasty with a rock in the middle channel of a 6 foot drop. What was more unnerving was to see water disappearing into a gap between rocks on the left side just above the drop. Also at the bottom a flow of water disappeared into a cave on the left. The rest of that side looked pretty manky with significant wood in the second drop. It was pretty clear to us why the right side is preferred.

We agreed that this level is about a low as any of us would care to run this but everything went and there were no significant difficulties. All in all a great day paddling with great people.

Canceled Patterson - became EB Pemi

Sunday Apr 26, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Jamie S, AJ S, Ryan M

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: low boatable

Gauge (ft): 450

Author: Ryan

All good plans.... have a backup plan.

The original plan was to get on Patterson (Upper White in Granville, VT) early morning and then snag something in the Dog River drainage. Maybe Stoney or DWB. Then when the flows weren't cooperating, we knew we had the Green all weekend with a single tube release, then that went belly up and we thought we could sneak in a double trouble of runs in Baker Valley and it was too cold so the bottom dropped out of the runs in that area..... What to do....The Wells??? Na, that would be Way Too Fluid! Let's go beat the bottom off our boats and hike into the upper the EB Pemi from Lincoln Woods and run it down through Loon proper to lower village.....and that is exactly what we did (beat the bottom of our boats in and hiked up from Lincoln Woods.

As we were hiking in, AJ stated that it really isn't as low as it looks, its just that the water is so clear that it looks shallow. That really didn't make any sense to me, but I was already in with boat feet and a mile up the trail to our designated put in. So I trudged along dragging my boat behind me trying to recall my only run on the EB Pemi from 2006.... that was like 9 years ago, how did that happen I thought to myself.

We got to a location that seemed as good as any to get in the water, so we did. What a nice slice of water through the White mountains. The upper portion of the EB Pemi is so picturesque, in the tight river valley between the looming White Mountains. The Rapids were mellow at the level we were playing today. The run felt more like a class II run up here than a III/IV.... Gotta luv ELF boating.

Once we hit where Hancock Branch came in, the flow bumped up some and the river valley opened up some along the Kanc. About every 200-300 yards there was a nice

boulder choked rapid. Most were clean and playful. If you read it right you could poke in and out of various channels and sneak your way through tight slots. I was taking this to the extreme and ended up in a sticky spot where I had to paddle down, but knew I was going to get housed, pinned or otherwise. There just "weren't" enough room for the SCUD to sneak through. Trying to drive up on and over a guard rock, my stern was sucked down and I pinned vertically, then flopped on my side and was now pinned horizontally and up stream, then flipped and was upside down pinned.... Time to swim. Thankfully the current was meager and I could just stand up and toss my boat and paddle into an eddy. HOLY SHIT the water is cold, even in my Drysuit it was bloody bitter. That was a wake up call to not horse around too much and work on staying upright and making clean lines...

We all stayed upright and dry the remainder of the run even with a couple of botched lines at the old USGS weir and a really ugly brace at the take out.

A decent run with AJ and Jamie - those guys are a fun pair to be on the water with. Jamie had to jet after we wrapped the run and AJ and I went to the Woodstock Brewery for some suds and wings. Great way to wrap a long run in the Whites.

Missisquoi Opener

Saturday May 2, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Catharine, Max, Connor, Anders, Eric, Kevin, Mike

Organizer: Jay snowmelt

Difficulty: nov-int WW

Level: high

Author: Mike

If there is one big story in Northeast paddling from the past few years, it's that Vermont is now a dam-release state. And one of the most important ones is the Missisquoi. Granted, it's not the best run in Vermont (it has really solid competition), but it's really fun, holds water pretty well and you can get a release on weekends when nothing else is running.

Surprisingly, it's been difficult to get folks interested in this run, so much so that I like to joke that it's "my personal dam release" since every time people paddle it it's almost always with me. And usually there are only a half dozen or more people on the river. Like the first weekend of this May: The weather was beautiful, the water level pleasant and the only other option was lowish-level lower Mad (which saw a lot of traffic that day, I am told). Meanwhile 7 of us were up on the Missisquoi running great class IV in the sunshine and just enjoying the hell out of the day. But really.... there should have been more people up there.

Sometimes I wonder if the reason the run doesn't see more traffic is because people just don't really know the deal. So here's a good description to get people started.

Water Level and Difficulty:

The dam sucks about 3000 cfs out of the river, and anything in excess spills over. To get the flow, multiply the East Berkshire gauge by 1.5, then subtract 3000. You can also

look at the Swanton gauge to get an idea of whether the river is rising or falling. With a big watershed, this section runs on spillover pretty frequently and is a great alternative to low-water New Haven Ledges. Also, the VPC can arrange releases, and frequently does in Spring and Fall weekends. The key for releases is that there needs to be enough water in the river anyways, since there's no reservoir... and often times there is except when we have a drought like we have now...dammit.

The general consensus is that 1000 cfs over the dam is a good low level. You can run it lower, but it gets rocky, and a look at the riverbed at fish flows shows that at really low water the whole thing just sieves out. So 1000 is low but still fun. Call it technical, straightforward class IV- at that level.... a step up from, but similar to, the Dryway. If you're one of those people that wishes there were more rapids like Dragon's Tooth and Labyrinth on the Dryway, you'll like this run.



Likewise, it can go really high. My guess is 10,000+ cfs when it will be huge but awesome. 30,000 cfs is two feet up in the trees though. I've caught it around 4,000 on natural spillover and it's great, exciting bigwater, but it's over fast. Solid IV+ at that level.

I think "in-between" levels are the best, say from 1500 up to around 2500. It's juicy, fun and well filled in but still has texture and still has defined rapids. Interestingly, right around 2000 the river changes character and goes from a juicy boofy technical feel to a boily big-water feel, though the features still aren't that big... just dynamic. I can't say which is better, other than that I like to get a nice variety over the course of the season. I'd call it fun, interesting class IV at these levels, though there are some sneak lines and hero lines if you so desire.

Rapids:

There are only a half-dozen rapids or so, but still plenty to do.

Right below the put-in is a quick ledge with a few fun lines depending on levels. Then a little moving water and you head right through a fun S-turn, or go left to sneak the next set.

Below this is "Big Schott", the biggest rapid on the run. It's a steep, turbulent boulder garden with a couple holes scattered around. You can run a funny tongue in the middle, a boof on the right or punch a few holes on the left, but ultimately you want to go right or left around the big middle hole at the bottom... or try and punch it.

A little more quick water and then "Straight Shot" which is a long, classic S-Turn. There are a few fun optional boofs or tricky eddies in here as well.

Below this is Ryan's Rapid (my name for it), named after a certain notable VT local paddler who swam under the big undercut boulder on the left. This pushes right into the last rapid which is a wide boulder garden with many different routes and a variety of slots, holes, waves, rocks, tongues, eddies and routes you can aim for or avoid. Then a little boogie with a few fun surf waves and you're at the power plant where you'll load up for another lap. Short but sweet... or "bite sized" as I like to say. But you'll be hard-pressed to find a better short class IV training run anywhere, especially in May in New England.

Enel:

The power plant is owned by Enel Green Power NA, and they've been really helpful so far. The dam operators are friendly and I get the sense that Enel (unlike a lot of Hydroelectric Companies) has seen the writing on the wall about recreational releases and genuinely wants people to enjoy the river. In fact, they own the powerplant on the Gauley and actually sponsor the annual downriver race there. Interestingly, their predecessor company owned the Vajont Dam in Italy when the disaster struck there in 1963 (an important Engineering Ethics case study), though I would say they do good nowadays.

In Summary...

It's fun, I hope to see more people up there.

Upper Pemi / East Br. Pemi

Wednesday-Thursday May 6-14, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Scott Gilbert, Becca Austin, Tom Neilson, Ben Schott, Clay Murphy, Ryan Mooney

Organizer: Scott Gilbert

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium low

Author: Clay Murphy & Scott Gilbert

From Clay:

The level was a medium low. This was perfect since most folks hadn't run this section before. Tom had the cleanest line through basin but everyone else had to make a roll. At Wham Ben brought daffodil flowers for each of us to leave in memory. Scott fired up Thank you Ma'am first and waited in the pool while Tom, Becca and I set safety for Ryan and Ben who were intent on seal launching for Bam down. Ben proceeded have a brutal piton off the launch, then timbered over upside down into the next chute. A swim (Ben), rope (Tom), and hand (Becca) later Ben was collected before getting worked or swimming into the next drop. The rest of the run was clean and really fun, especially towards the end when everyone launched the slide unaware.

Scott fired up the East Pemmi this AM. I may be able to do the same early Saturday AM since I have to camp out with some non-paddling friends that way Friday night. I am also free Sunday and would like to paddle.

From Scott:

It was really good to finally get back on the Upper Pemi since the passing of Alan. It made it even more special to be there with a bunch of his friends most running it for their first time. Last time I had been there was guiding Alan down for his first trip, we had a solid level and he had really loved it! That river has always been a favorite of mine (in my top 5) but now really holds a special place with me. Thanks Ben for bringing flowers, it was certainly cathartic to take a moment at the sentinel bridge. I also think Alan would have taken great amusement in your swim. Big props to Tom for the clutch throw bag.

East Branch of the Pemi was wicked cool. Hiked up around 2:30-3 with only a (nearly) full moon to light the way. Put on Franconia brook still under moonlight, and

paddled down to Lincoln as the sun came up. Level was about 1000. Was back to my car before 7 am. I think it would have been reasonable to paddle the entire section just under light of the moon and if the opportunity ever arises again I will be trying to make it happen. It had been a frustrating spring for me up to now, missing a lot of opportunities, amazing how a day of good adventure can turn that around.

Another Pemi/EB Pemi Trip report

Saturday May 9, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Mike, Will, Becca, lots of Maine Folks

Organizer: Mike

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium low

Gauge (cfs): 500

Author: Mike

Most of the week I was bombarded with reports of sunny weather and great water levels in New Hampshire, but aside from a quick low-water Mad lap my week was nothing but work. That had been pretty much the story for my entire spring and I was a bit frustrated. It seemed unlikely that the good snowmelt would continue through the weekend, but I figured at least I'd get a solo low-water EB Pemi lap in to help keep myself sane.

Surprisingly, Will was game for a trip over there, and Friday afternoon showed levels not dropping a whole lot. Tom had an itch for logging that needed scratching and Becca figured that after she dropped him off for his logging class she could meet us for a run with a couple other Maine folks, and so it looked like a Saturday of paddling was lined up.

We met a big group of Maine folks at Lincoln woods and as usual, inquiries into my State of origin were made, until I told them who their home state was named after. And being residents of a state devised for my vacationing purposes, they were eager to do the 3-mile hike up to the upper section. They were so motivated in fact that while I was still the first to the put-in bridge, I had barely enough time to drink my beer before the rest of the group showed up.

There's not a whole lot to say about the EB Pemi but it was a little over 1000 cfs and at that level it's a lot of fun class III with tons of fun boofs, slots, eddies and holes to mess around with. At the regular put-in Will and I decided we needed to get moving to catch the Upper Pemi and did the rest of the run in about 45 minutes, passing several more large groups of paddlers out enjoying the beautiful day, and when we did shuttle we ran into yet more paddlers putting in. There must have been 40 boaters on the river that day, enjoying it like everyone should.

Up at the Upper Pemi put-in, we judged the level acceptable and put on, neither of us having done the run before. After Alan's passing, I thought I'd never do this run, but now I think that's not a great legacy nor a good way to remember someone. We took a conservative approach that involved some careful scouting and a ton of careful

eddy-hopping and two portages. What a great run. Tons of polished granite and clear water that in places takes on an iridescent blue-green hue, not from any sort of sediment but rather the scattering of light off millions of tiny suspended air bubbles. Unlike a lot of other New England creeks it's not super-steep or stacked... but somehow every time you turn around there's another great, decent-sized rapid.

Jogging shuttle up the bike path was an added bonus, with dusk settling into the spruce and birches while orange sunlight still hung on Lafayette and Cannon above. On foot I was surprised at how short this run really is... 2 or 3 miles though it feels longer. And that's just it... a run that just keeps going and going.

And other things that just keep going and going: memories of people we paddle with, or mellow runs where we remember what we love about the sport.

Poultney River

Friday May 15, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: John Atherton, Eric Bishop, Ken Emery

C1: Tony Shaw

Organizer: Tony Shaw

Difficulty: int-adv WW

Level: medium

Gauge (ft): 4.75

Gauge (cfs): 575

Author: Tony Shaw

Several emails and message board posts later, we still hadn't decided where to paddle – whether in VT or NY - on the Friday Jamie, Tina, John, and I had set aside to ski Tuckerman's. The whole Tuckerman's idea was something my daughter Katy cooked up: "Let's ski Tuckerman's, dad, before you're too old to do it". Bah! But the conditions in the ravine sounded too treacherous for everyone's taste, and still undecided about VT or NY we found a river to split the difference, so to speak.

It's been years since I've run the Poultney below Fair Haven, but I remember it fondly. It was after noon when we arrived at the Vermont Welcome Center, the usual put-in for this ledgy class III-IV run that holds water better than a lot of VT/NY rivers after a heavy May rainstorm (like the one we had on Tuesday). The lip of the first drop on the Poultney is visible looking north from the US 4 bridge between Whitehall NY and Fairhaven VT, but to our dismay precious little water was disappearing over that lip.

In contrast, when John and I drove a few minutes earlier to leave his car at the take-out at the Carver Falls dam, a TON of water was spilling over the 120+ foot series of waterfalls cascading below the dam. Scratching our heads, and braving the poison ivy at the put-in, we picked our way downstream, scraping down the first ledge drop with the only casualties being to plastic. Moments later we had a really fun time accelerating down the big slide below the RR bridge, despite the fact that this was the lowest level I've ever seen this feature. After Eric (going first as usual) got spun around backward on some exposed pointy rocks on river right below the slide, Ken (admitted later) he had visions of a detour

through the ER on the way home from close encounters with exposed riverbed. But instead, the 3 of us in hard shell boats came through the tailrace of the big slide without incident. By the time we got to the confluence with the Castleton River, it had dawned on me that inflow from this tributary (which drains Lake Bomoseen) was the wildcard that accounted for the 575 cfs real-time gauge reading on the USGS "Poultney Below Fairhaven" website. From here down, the flow on the Poultney was easily quadrupled, and all the remaining ledge drops and rapids were challenging and/or delightful. I was happy to have brought the Phat (my c-boat) because in the open canoe I would have had to stop and empty out repeatedly, the waves were that big.

Until the last big feature, everything was read-and-run, but the terminal hole just left of the island on the final drop gave everyone pause, in part because a submerged tank-sized pillow rock just downstream of the "frowning" hole made swimming out of the feature seem iffy. Eric, in great spirits and good form, looking the most confident we've seen him since he started paddling the Thrill Seeker/Duckie, cleaned the opening ledge, hugged the right bank to get right of the island (safely avoiding the big hole), and then managed to strand his TS on the slippery island where he set safety in case one or the other of us got



pushed (or sucked) into the hole. Perhaps it wasn't as bad a hole as it appeared, but thankfully one by one we all took various routes above - over the first pourover - and then all managed to get right and stay right, avoiding the hole completely.

The new chain link fence at the take-out has a break at one end so that if you are careful you can paddle right up close to your shuttle vehicle, but whatever you do don't get too close to the dam or it will be the last thing you do. We went for a little exploratory hike down below the dam once in dry clothes with boats all on John's car, discovering that OMG Carver Falls is a sight to behold, particularly with several hundred CFS of water coming down, around, over, and through.

Missisquoi Release #2

Saturday May 30, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: 5 Dartmouth kids, Ben, Catharine, Jim, Brock, Sarah, Cam, Danny, Eric, Kevin, Billy, Max, Sam, Mike

Organizer: AW, Enel, etc.

Difficulty: int-adv WW

Level: low boatable

Author: Mike M

With year-to-date precipitation nearing 60% of normal and the NWS putting VT in a minor drought, I had pretty much given up on paddling much this season. The last weekend of May offered the potential of an inch or so of rain Saturday evening, but it seemed unlikely that an inch would even wet the ground, much less bring anything

worthwhile up. And so the weekend looked to be one of car maintenance, doing a week's worth of laundry or catching up at the office.

Then I got an email from Bob Nasdor. It looked like the Missisquoi was up and if I could get a group of five committed Enel was willing to give us a low water release. Well 2:00 rolled around and it was like pulling teeth getting enough folks interested. Then all of a sudden 10 people were committed and it looked like I wasn't going to be doing laundry on Saturday morning.

I usually get up there a little before 10 to meet the dam operator and get things rolling. As 10:00 approached I was surprised to see many more cars with boats pulling in, and then the Dartmouth van. The Enel Dam Op folks are really reliable and are always there ready to turn the water on but 10:00 rolled around and no dam operator. Folks joked that there must be a wall switch somewhere that we could use... but as the clocked passed 10:05 still no luck and furrowed brows looked towards me, imploring me to find some sort of liquid to paddle on that beautiful morning. Worried that I'd look like a fool I headed for the takeout and sure enough a guy from Enel was on his way up. And before long 18 boaters were watching the flap gate open and spill 1000 cfs of silty green water into the Sheldon Springs Bypass.

There's not much more to the day, other than that we did 5 laps as a giant group. Every time I turned around the river would be full of boaters, ferrying back and forth, boofing, surfing and running different lines. It was great to see. The 1000 cfs level was a little lower than ideal but still 100% fun, though the middle tier of Big Schott and a few other places have some really legitimate pin potential at these lower levels. Regardless, Enel actually shut the whole plant down to get us the water, so I wasn't complaining.

We finished our last lap a little before 3:30. It was still sunny and surprisingly hot, but there were cumulonimbus clouds to the west and the breeze smelled like rain.

Stony Brook - in the shadows

Monday Jun 8, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan, Justin, Chan

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium high

Gauge (cfs): 1500

Author: Ryan

Ticking of the hits list here... I hadn't been on Stony since early 2014 when there were still ice bridges hanging on. This day the water was up at a meaty flow and we had warm temps.

Justin and Chan were itching to get on the water...as was I. Skating out of work early we made a mad dash for Northfield. We put a vehicle at Gillespies Fuels and jammed up to the put in. Of note, the old class V take out has long since been removed. The house that used to house 2 highly aggressive pit bulls was bought by Gillespies and demolished. The stress level instantly diminished the day that happened. WHEW!

The put in is a great spot. A seasonal home that has a funky covered bridge in the side yard off of Chamberlain Road. We put in at the Covered bridge. This upper section is a blast and somewhat of a bobsled run. The drops gorge up and you are looking for green water and boof options. There are a couple of strainers in here that are passable, but you still need to be on your toes. The strainer of concern is directly at the bottom of the old mill dam. It makes this rapid (With its awesome lead in) a no go. So know where it's at and know where to get out of the river to portage it. Below the mill the river picks up some more flow and things get hoppin'. The next rapid of note is after you cross under Stony Brook Road. It is a funky bouldery thing that has a ledge drop into a pool where you can eddy out behind an island and then you need to stay on the green between two massive undercuts. The exit is guarded by another boulder that you skirt on either side.... It's a great test piece! Below is a low hanging pedestrian bridge, watch your paddle here.

Now we are into it. The ledges start coming at you regularly. Justin and Chan were totally digging this run... This section is Boof Central. There is a lot of high-speed rapids in here too. 2-3 strainers that require you to portage as well. Justin and I were sucked into a pretty fast channel at one of these rapids and luckily the strainer we came up on was duckable.

Below the Gauge rock (second bridge under Stony Brook Road). The ledges get considerably bigger and the horizon lines more intimidating. One such ledge, drops you into the back water of a dam. Combined, the ledge/dam combo is around 18 feet. The Dam has a great rolling lip that you can yank a huge boof off of. Moving down river we knew of one more major strainer to deal with. We had planned to portage it on river left until a massive dog was there barking and yapping away. There was a crazy man there too.... Yes he lives in a camper down by the river. He was whooping and hollering at us. The river was too loud to hear him, but he sure was excited to see us. We were losing daylight and need to get to the last and largest rapid before things closed out in the dark.

Working our way down to the last rapid, Junior's House, I was not confident we would be able to fire it up with light. Crazy man was there waiting for us and excited as hell to see us run this 20'+ drop. Its a fun drop with several tiers ending in two good boofs. I ran first and cleaned the line, Chan was next with a less than clean line, but ended up a-ok, and Justin was all good as well. One more good boof and then the take out in the dark.

Crazy guy was there with beers for us! Gotta luv crazy guys from down by the river in Northfield.....

NBW - Green Leaves & Short Sleeves

Wednesday Jun 10, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan, Justin, Chan

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium

Author: Ryan

June 2013 - Rain Rain and more Rain....

The North Branch Winooski seemed to run just about every day in June and early July. This was the first of 3 fantastic NBW runs over the next month. This particular Justin and I introduced Chan to the North Branch Winooski.

At the put in the water was murky and high - always a good sign. The first few ledges are always a tell-tale of how the run is going to feel. The ledges were forming holes.... Whoot Whoot!

Warming up nicely down to Broken Falls, we gave verbal cues to Chan. He was right on line and cleaned his first NBW drop. As we worked our way down through the 3 sisters (Notch, Crunch and turtleback) Notch was sketchy because there is a log in the main flow/line. We got great boofs off of turtle back. Next was pinch gorge. Nothing major - the hole in the middle was pulsing some, but a good stroke and you were bopping through.

On occasion, I would look back to check in on Chan - the kid was ear to ear grins!

Next up was our first substantial drop...Fine-line. Down the green water to the boof. I demo'd it for the boys. Justin styled it. Chan got knocked off line and went toward the pothole. He managed to get his nose up and clean it, but was close. I think that was a wake up call for him.

Manky-manky was next. I hate this drop! Especially the right line on Manky. My first swim of 2015 took place as I was stuffed under the wall of the rock island! What the heck! Smashed though and bruised ego. Back up I went to clean it. No problem. The guys were waiting for me at the bottom... Next up BIG BOUNCY.

All three of us got out to get a look. T'was fluid and G2G with enough flow and no wood. I went first snagging a couple of micro eddies on the way down. I also grabbed a good paddle full on the final boof onto the slide. Next up was Justin - he smoothed the line the whole way through. Chan nudded up and did the same. BTW - he was doing this in a leaky totally beat Embudo. The kid is a stud.

Wood blocked the entrance to the tunnel, so we needed to portage to the other side. Flat falls also has a massive log in it so boofing the right side is a must. But the boof isn't enough, there is one hell of a nasty piton rock in there that will snag you if you are too far right! We all got it to a varying degree.

Up next - Sliding board. Such a fun blind drop but without a doubt the nastiest hole on the river. There is one line and not hitting that line results in one thing - a swim above a 35' waterfall. The line - hang on the river left wall.....PERIOD. I led and eddied out to set safety and take pictures. Next was Justin, he was far left as well. Chan came around with no speed and was too far right. I heard the sucking noise even before the nose of his Embudo touched down in the back-toe. He held on for a roll for a good while before he swam and was body recirc'd a few times. I hit him with a rope and we reeled him out. His paddle went by and over the falls, His boat was still in there. Justin was out of his boat and on the other side of the river. I hit him with my rope and we reeled in Chan's boat. We also got Chan's paddle for him.

Now we were set for Double Drop. Best drop on the river. Boof the initial 10ft and then hang on for the "pillow fight" final few hits into a meltdown drop. SO DAMN AWESOME!!! The bigger the boof of the top the better the drop goes! I think we all styled it nicely

Next is Cave Hole. There are two lines here, the slide to auto boof and the rolling lip over the hole in front of the cave. Justin and I fired up the boof off the lip. My first one

went sloppy and I had to roll. Second go went cleanly for me. Chan went off the slide a little to the right and actually fell in next to the hole.

We headed down to the Last Drop. It was closed out with Wood on the left line and none of us were feeling like anything off the middle or right was good to go, so that was the end of the run.

Beers at the take out - and off we went. It was fun to introduce a newbie to the the Church of the NBW.

Elmore Pond what?

Friday Jun 12, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Scott, Clay, Ben, Billy, Mike

Organizer: Scott

Difficulty: other

Level: medium low

Author: Mike M

It took quite awhile for the 2015 rains to arrive, but when they did around the start of June, they did so with vigor and stuck around for awhile. By the afternoon of June 12th the New Haven was headed north of 3000 and Billy was kind enough to get a Ridley visual, finding it too high... and there were at least two more heavy bands of rain waiting to nail most of northern Vermont. We made plans to head north and find something to paddle... maybe Sterling, maybe the Green... but hopefully not getting flash-flooded in the process.

Heading up through Stowe Scott called and told us Elmore Pond Brook was in and did we want to check that out?

Elmore Pond what?

Elmore Pond Brook is the tiny creek that drops from Elmore Pond down into the Lamoille, right across from the Green. Back when the Green first came onto everyone's radar, Ryan pointed out that there was potential for dam control here, and that there was gradient and maybe someday this would be a dam-release run. Then I think Dave mentioned two clean waterfalls... but I may have imagined that. Then everyone promptly forgot about it.

Heading up through Morrisville the skies really opened up and it just kept pouring. We put in right above the bridge and found the first half-mile to be fairly flat and choked with (fortunately pliable) Dogwood. Once the creek entered the woods the brush thinned a bit, and things steepened into some decent class II-III, which persisted for quite a ways with a lot of wood. I think in the first mile of real creek we might have been in and out of our boats 4 or 5 times to carry around wood, and probably squeezed under twice that many logs. Without the wood it would be pleasant enough though there weren't really any defined or memorable rapids... sort of like a slightly wider, slightly shallower, slightly less steep, somewhat less twisty Patterson-Martins.

After another mile or so of this we came to a surprisingly sweet, somewhat out of control boulder garden. Not far below was another steeper one that Ben ran quite smoothly... but had sketchy wood in the last drop so the rest of us carried. Below this was a more bedrocky drop that had either a sieve or rib-smasher rock that we carried, and then

another boulder garden with more wood. We ran (as in, paddled) a sneak through the woods on the left (yes, through the woods), plunking into a big mud puddle where there was just a short carry back into the main channel. Below here things relaxed with a half-mile or so of wood-free boogie that was actually decent enough before we hit the large, muddy Lamoille and paddled out a mile to the takeout.

After this Scott bought us beers in Morrisville so we wouldn't hate him... not that we did but pretending to is a great way to get free pints.

Paterson at a low level (Shocker)

Tuesday Jun 23, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan, Chan

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: int-adv WW

Level: too low

Author: Ryan

How many Patterson reports have I put on this TR section of the VPC message board. Well I think this one may take the record books for the Lowest EVER!!!! Chan Smith has been bitten by the boating bug, so he would point his boat down anything. I like to ELF - so away we went. Besides, what do you do when you show up at Patterson Brook. You run it - Low, High or anywhere in between.

We had fun, and as has been said before, the bedrock does a good job of channeling things up even in low water conditions. Also because of the extensive wood that was deposited this past winter, it made sense to check it out at low conditions. It was definitely loaded up with wood in some pretty in opportune areas. There had been a ton of work done in the early spring - thanks Sean L. But we still saw a number of areas that could be sketchy at higher flows.

Chan had his first micro experience and was hooked. To top it off - he was paddling in a boat of legend. The Packie Embudo. That old battleship was retired 5 years ago. I did a bang up weld job on it so it could be used in low stress situations to learn rolling, gave it to Chan and he beat the living daylight out of it for the majority of the spring getting his creeking legs under him.

FUN STUFF!

Sometimes we do good - Flint Brook

Tuesday Jun 23, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Scott, Clay, Billy, Adam

Organizer: Mike

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: low boatable

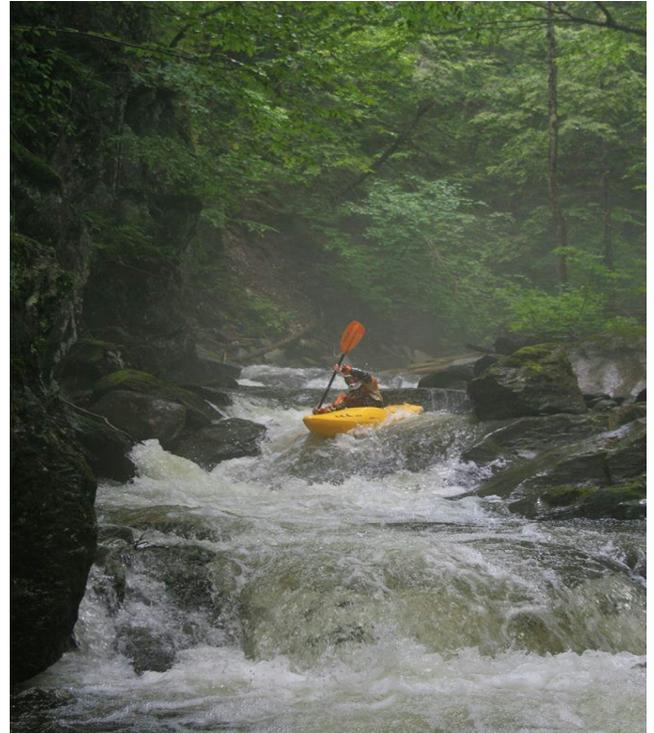
Gauge (cfs): 200

Author: Mike

Flint Brook is a tiny little creek that drops off the east side of Northfield Ridge. It's even more obscure than other Northfield Ridge creeks. Driving up the Second Branch of the White you don't see a whole lot - the creek diffuses into a big wetland before crossing the road, while nearby Sandusky and E. Granville Brooks clearly pour out of steep, deep appealing gorges. And so Flint is one of those runs you'll find only if you're driving around somewhat lost.

Once you find it though you will immediately be interested. The access road is incredibly steep to start with... steep enough you might pass the creek off as way too steep to paddle. But then the road flattens out and you get appealing glimpses of decent-sized bedrock rapids. If you pull over and try to get a look, you'll find things down in a deep, very steep forested canyon that is right at home in Vermont yet not at all typical. Then climb down into the canyon and look at the last half-mile or so of the creek and you'll be pretty excited. A few of us had looked at it over the past few years... but it had somehow remained pretty much untouched, at least as far as anyone knew.

June 23 offered yet another round of heavy rain though I doubted I'd have time to get out of work to enjoy it that day. Ryan mentioned Flint in an email and that immediately got my attention. I immediately made plans for a long lunch break and at 11 headed over with Billy to meet the rest of the crew.



At the bottom it looked pretty low... things seemed a little drier over there, but I knew most of the creek was bedrock and figured it'd be good for a first-time exploring sort of thing. We drove up to maybe a quarter mile above the 4-way intersection to where the road was blocked, and unloaded. There's more gradient upstream, but it's not as channelized and is mostly the standard bouldery/cobbly micro without much in the way of real rapids.

Right around the corner from the put-in there was a great, steep boulder garden. It looked bumpy at this level but was surprisingly smooth and pretty aesthetic, ending in a bedrock slot between two sculpted walls. Flint was definitely taking an early lead. Then some sliding and bouldery stuff that needed a little more water and some wood removal to be prime but was still pretty good all things considered. This widened a bit before the bridge but all went fine with the low water. Score 2, 3 and 4 for Flint. And on my initial scout the previous year I didn't even think we'd bother running this first section!

Below the bridge was a quarter mile of pretty dechannelized cobbly stuff that would probably pretty much never have enough water to be good, then two tributaries came in and the bedrock came back. The first of these we walked because there wasn't a good line,

but with just a bit more water it'd be a great boof. There is a private bridge accessing a hunting camp here, and that might make a better low-water put-in in the future. Below this Flint really started showing it's quality with many slides and ledges, one or two smallish falls and the odd boulder garden here and there... none of this was that big but it all seemed to be good quality and pretty much every time you turned around there was another good rapid. Unfortunately there was enough wood we probably carried (at least partially) almost as many rapids as we ran... but without wood this would all go and all be really fun.

There were more rapids in this section than I remembered from scouting a few years previously, and a few I hadn't gotten a look at, and I was surprised at how deep the canyon felt despite the road being just a hundred feet or so up. I think there's a bit over half a mile of this.

Then, the canyon really deepens and steepens and there is perhaps one of the finest sections of small creek in Vermont... first a long, lowish-angle, 5-part slide that you could probably run on a tube. Then the creek turns a corner and there's another slide, a sort of folding slide-ledge thing, a great looking slide with a few giant boulders scattered around on it, then one more slide. Unfortunately there were probably a dozen trees lying in this stretch so this section is still waiting to see polyethylene. If you do run this (and I hope you do) know that this ends in a brief wider spot before dropping over a pretty big double drop that does a solid 50+ feet total... though the second tier is probably runnable. Portaging or getting out of the canyon would be tough though still totally possible. But... that will have to wait for some other day with less wood.

Without the wood Flint is definitely one of the best sections of Vermont microcreek that's more than a quarter-mile long. Sure Texas Falls is sweet and that last section of Hancock has the goods... but we're basically talking park-n-huck distance. If you were to do the whole run I think it's something like 1.3 miles at 350 feet per mile. And all but 30 feet of that is pretty much runnable.

Gihon after work

Thursday Jun 25, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan, Justin, Chan, Chris I, Matt Y

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium low

Author: Ryan

Another usual suspect for an afterwork run...

The Gihon holds water better than most creeks in the state, because of the size of its watershed extending all the way up into Belvidere and Eden. It also has a large wetland complex that releases flow slowly. We had plenty of rain lately and a few of us were game to make the drive north.

Having Ingram with us is a treat, because I think he may have close to as many runs as Dave or Scott G on this river. He knows all of the fun kooky little lines and such to have a great go.

Chan was again new to the run and lobbing a newbie off of the first drop, the 35 foot dam face is always a fun. I think he thought it fun too. Of note - the Woodsides, the folks that own the dam are usually less than ok with people running the dam, especially Mrs Woodside. On this day they were sitting at their kitchen table eating dinner and watched us fire up the drop. I actually think I saw Mr. Woodside give us fist-pump!

With more high quality rapids in the upper gorge than I can remember or that have been named, we were all grins. Of the two that are named, Balls to the Wall, is especially fun and its a left to right move to get on the green water tongue. and not fall off into the crack. A few more quality boofs and then Mustang - a great class V drop that is very runnable but also sports some really serious consequences. The entire group opted to portage and fire off the seal launch.

Flat water was next for a good stretch to the lower Gihon that has all of its quality rapids named starting with Bed-Head. Everyone ran it cleanly and into Coliseum which went cleanly into Spinach (Carpet Factory) which we all ran cleanly on a suggestion from Chris Ingram to run the initial drop on the left....FUN!

Next drop was Pin Cushion that has a fantastic boof off of the large boil or what looks like a pin cushion. Then was the Power House. A nice long and fast rapid. Stay out of the notch is the best advice! Sunshine has a great line far left that Chris also showed us and then we bopped on down to the drop in town that is a bunch of fun too...

Beers in the rain at the take out were well earned.... After work runs are the best!

Patterson and Top New Haven

Sunday Jun 28, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Noah, Tom N, Chan, Chris I, Scott G, Ryan D, Justin and Ryan M

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium low

Author: Ryan

Patterson - whoot whoot with more water. We fired off double laps here as the levels dropped out. We all were bopping down it boat scouting and such. Super strong group on a fun river at a lowish level.

Top New Haven - We lost Scott, Chan and Noah after the 2 Patterson runs. The rest of the crew held on for something new. Over Lincoln Gap we went and set shuttle. There was a good bit of wood in the river, but do able. The first rapid was a manky mess with less than a clean line, but we all made it work and it went surprisingly smooth. There were numerous remarkable rapids up to the signature Waterfall with the SUPER AUTO BOOF. We all fired it off and were smart about our landings for the most part (myself landing way too flat). More remarkable rapids followed with one of the last ones sporting a super sticky hole that I landed squarely in. With several minutes (seconds) of bracing and working back and forth - it spit me out and into the rest of the rapid backwards. Tom Grabbed my bow and pulled me up and out. Great save because running the notch below off line would have stunk! Several more good rapids followed.

This is an excellent slice of whitewater that should be on your shortlist to go run!

We wrapped up and shared beers all around... Another fantastic day on the river with fellow VT boaters.

NBW after work #2

Wednesday Jul 1, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan and Justin

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium high

Author: Ryan

Yea - I did say the level was medium/high. How good was it at this level you ask, AWESOME. All drops were fluid and the river was rising... We had great lines down to Sliding board where Justin missed the move and went in the hole. 5 laps around the rim and he was toast, I roped him out and then chased his paddle. We ran out of daylight and called it a day.

First time for everything - we walked off the river due to failing daylight. BUMMER.

Whitewater and a Wedding

Thursday-Saturday Jul 16-Sep 19, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Too many to list

K2: Ben and Catharine

Raft: some

Organizer: Ben and Catharine

Difficulty: flatwater

Level: medium

Author: Jordan Vickers

Come one come all was the motto as paddlers flocked from all over the Northeast to paddle, party and show their support for Ben Schott and Catharine Hull. Ben's family has a camp about as close as you can get to the Kennebec River near the Forks Maine. Arriving late Thursday night I missed the rehearsal dinner (and my free lobster!) but made it to the after party in time to meet everyone and enjoy the lakeside cabin. Friday morning came all too soon and it was the couples desire to paddle their favorite stretch of whitewater (Kennebec Gorge) on the day of their nuptials. After a delayed start and hiking down a



giant pontoon raft (for a friend of Ben's) we were on the river several hours before the ceremony. Whitewater does what it always seems to do and takes your distractions away. We paddled the gorge down to the first takeout surfing, laughing and just having an all-around blast. When we got off the river it was go time. Food was eaten, hair was done, bow ties were attempted to be tied and somehow everyone made it where they were supposed to on time. The wedding went off without a hitch, well maybe one (pun intended) and soon everyone was socializing, playing lawn games, overeating, drinking and reconnecting with what seemed like more and more paddlers crashing the wedding. If you were lucky you even got to see Mike Mainer bust a move or two on the dance floor. It was as graceful as you would imagine. The party went on late into the night at the lakeside cabins and once again morning came all too soon.

Saturday we reconvened at Ben's family camp where dozens of paddler's cars littered the field. It was quite remarkable how many paddlers showed up! Shuttles began getting set and we were up at the put in in no time. Many dressed up in costumes I believe Scott cross-dressed (looking all too comfortable with a women's wig on), Graham was in a suit and there were many others. Once on the river groups mixed and mingled all the while the newlyweds took the same Duo they used the day of their engagement for their maiden voyage as a married couple. The words "Just Married" written on the bottom. Champagne was had at the takeout and some made their way downstream for the full run, others went for a second lap and some went back to camp. There were many shenanigans and jokes played on and off the river that day. Drain plugs were opened, rolls were inhibited and I heard a few rocks were placed in someone's boat at the takeout. Overall it's exactly what you would expect! That night the party shifted to camp where bonfires were built, fireworks went off and beers

were drank. Some made it far into the night; others had some much needed sleep. Sunday most went back for two casual laps on the Kennebec and others made their long drive back to Vermont (and other parts of the northeast).

Congratulations to the newlyweds on a great wedding and weekend of whitewater!

NBW before work

Monday Jul 20, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan and Justin

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium high

Author: Ryan

It was pouring the night before.... Inches and Inches came down. The spring and ditch across from my house was flowing at a high level. It was 75 degrees. Go time.... sent a note to the boss that I'd be in late.

On my way to the put in to meet Justin - a tree had fallen across the road. You have to be kidding me! I pulled out my boat saw and cut a few branches to get through. 5 minutes late and we are off to set shuttle. It didn't look all that high at the take out - but up at the put in it was thumping - he had actually caught the bubble right at the put in!!!! BooYa!

Everything was super fluid and clean. Hmmm - so this is what the NBW is like at a good level!

I can't describe all the rapids and how SWEET they are anymore than I've done the last dozen or so years I've been entering TRs on the NBW. But at this level, with this temperature and early morning with a good boating partner. Man this run is what VT creeking is about.

Third time's a charm - we hit it on the money, had clean runs and to cap it off - Justin is off to MO with his family for a new start in a new state. He got 3 runs on the NBW this spring. Come back and see us some time man.

Want Ad...

- In need of new Creeking Partner. Must know how to handle a throw bag, not get upset at sporadic swims, likes to ELF from time to time. Has good taste in beer (Mountain Brew is not good) for take out festivities. Has solid boof. Can make early morning NBW runs. Willing to help cut wood out of runs. Can take bad jokes.

Quebec done right

Saturday-Sunday Aug 15-16, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Scott, Clay, Mike, Tom, Becca, Alex, Luke, Graham, Carleton

Organizer: Northern branch of the jet stream

Difficulty: advanced WW
Level: medium
Gauge (cfs): 700
Author: Mike M

What a great weekend. Sure we could have gone to the Valin and got some sweet GoPro footage for our blogs, or the Malbaie for a Facebook profile waterfall picture. Or the Taureau for something to boast about later in the summer. But instead we went paddling for the right reasons and went up to have some good reasonable fun on the Neilson at a nice level with a great crew.

It's always funny how a group can grow like that. On Wednesday it looked like it was just going to be Clay, Scott, myself and a mountain bike for shuttle... but on Thursday Carleton and Graham announced they'd be meeting us up there. On Friday Tom and Becca said they'd make it, and Friday afternoon each group had added Luke and Alex, respectively. Great folks to boat with.

The Neilson is about four hours from Burlington, so it's not too hard to make it up there before midnight or so on a Friday. The entrance fee is \$10 per vehicle, and with a recently refreshed knowledge of French letters & numbers getting our day pass went smoothly. As Graham said, "They know a lot more English than they let on". The rest of the group showed up Saturday morning and after making some healthy egg ham & cheese burritos we dropped a car at the lowest takeout, ready for the full 9-mile run. Shuttle is maybe 30 minutes each way and gains a surprising amount of elevation... reminding you



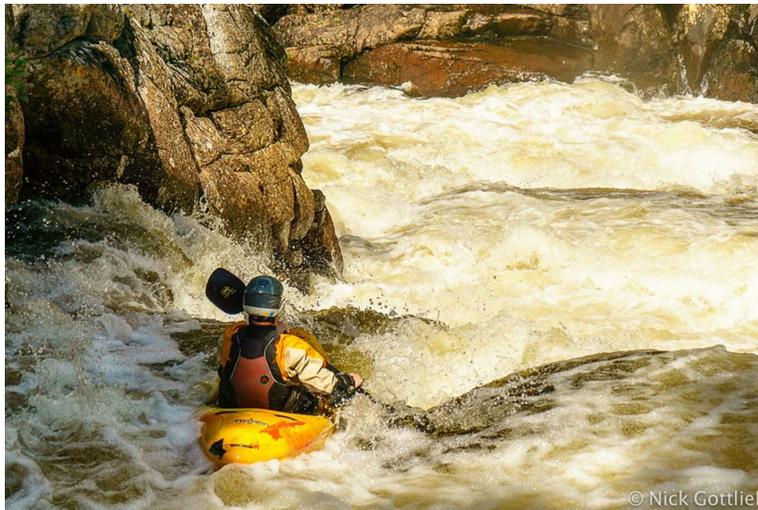
that while the Neilson is not a steep run, it's got good gradient pretty much the whole way. On the water we found a nice warm sunny medium level and dove right on into the great, juicy class IV boulder gardens that start after a half mile or so. I love this part of the run, when things are just getting started and you know that beyond that front grab loop you've got 9 miles of great boating. With four folks that hadn't been there, it was even better since I knew they had no idea about that!

It's a great addictive habit: we would get to a horizon line, usually choked with big granite boulders. Remembering a little from previous runs and with a little boat scouting, we worked your way through it, hopefully scoring a sweet boof or two, and ended up in a pool at the bottom where we regrouped and then turned around to see the same thing downstream. I think there are probably 30-40 of these, none of it gnarly but it's all good, active paddling. Eventually, once we'd lost track of how many rapids we had run and didn't

care how many lay before us, an abrupt change occurred - the valley suddenly opened up, the rapids turned to bedrock and the imposing form of the Gros Bonnet appeared over the treetops. So there are another handful of fun rapids here before the road drops back down to the river, which is the end of the Neilson A section.

The Neilson B section is interesting. It's sort of like a continuation of the A section, if not a bit lower quality, yet there are three big drops that are much larger than anything on the A, and probably larger than anything in Vermont. The pothole drop finally went after I decided I hadn't swum yet this year. The powerful bottom hole pushed me through upside down, no swim required and others had clean lines. The drops down here are sizeable and juicy and like Scott said, "It feels like something from Mark Trail". The pink granite cliffs rise from the river before giving way to the thick green woods, then fold back to reveal the massive, western-sized stern gray south face of the Gros Bonnet. Two miles of shallow but fast class III lead to the takeout bridge.

Like any classic river, there's decent camping right up by the put-in. Alex had scored us a site at Lac Picard with enough space for a dozen boaters. It's scenic country up there, not totally spectacular but with lots of craggy smallish mountains, reflecting lakes and orange sunsets. Alex also brought a lot of marinated steak and as usual Graham was generous with his snacks and beer and so we passed a pleasant, mellow evening up here.



Surprisingly, the black flies weren't bad at all, allowing me to sleep outside without a tent, listening to unknown creatures conduct surreptitious activities off in the woods.

We did the Neilson A again on Sunday. There were a surprising amount of locals out boating there as well. Eager for an early return we didn't go for the B section. This had us on the road by 2 and back in Burlington before 7, which is pretty good for a weekend paddling in the Quebec wilds, especially on a river that's so high quality for 9 miles yet doesn't have a single mandatory portage, and that runs a lot in August.

And so that's how you're rewarded for paddling for the right reasons. Here's to many more great weekends in Quebec.

Ottawa River

Friday-Monday Sep 4-7, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Kerry W, Melanie R, Brock R, Paul C, Sue S, Sarah C, Boris G, Jim P

Doing Own Thing: Dawn D and Kala The Mascot

Organizer: Jim Poulin

Difficulty: int-adv WW

Level: medium low

Author: Jim Poulin

Friday, September 4, 2015

Kerry and Melanie win the award for the first to arrive. Around 3:30pm. They opted to go for a swim down in the river. Jim and Dawn were the next in camp with our mascot for the weekend, Kala. This was the first trip for their Winnebago View. But not the first time an RV has graced this weekend. Ken and Leann drove their "Turtle" up a few years back. There was some, but not much, debate about doing a run of the Middle channel. Calmer heads prevailed and the four of us got down to drinking some tequila! In the first of many perfect timing coincidences, Boris meets Paul and Sue at the front kiosk as they pull in. They kindly show Boris to the Pet Haven Base Camp. There was a campfire with tall tales, old and new told. While everyone tried to stay up from Brock's arrival some didn't quite make it. Brock and Kim, er, I mean Sarah pulled into town about midnight. The river level was -0.75 but we didn't care...

Saturday, September 5, 2015...River level was -0.75.

This is arguably the best level for Garburator and since the World Freestyle Championships are being held there, this has been the consistent level reading all week long. Those that slept through it, welcomed Brock and Sarah to Team Vermont. If I can count correctly, this would be the first time in my memory that women outnumbered the men at the Ottawa. While there were four boaters of each gender, Shuttle Bunny extraordinaire, Dawn and the mascot Kala (female Standard Poodle) tipped the scales strong in favor of estrogen over testosterone. But don't think for a second we skipped paddling to talk about our feelings. This is a paddling weekend! Our first run of the weekend was the Middle Channel. There was some time spent at McCoys. For both the veterans to scout and for the River Rookies to wonder how one would run this maelstrom. We all made it through one way or another and headed downstream. The Middle Channel proved to be a good warm up. Although the group did end up changing the names on some of the rapids. Henceforth, Butterfly will be called HOLY F\$#K!!! Little No Name will be referred to as Wee No Nah May. And in the same vein, Big No Name will go by Ginormous No Nah May. At Ginormous no Nah May, Boris wanted to run the right side with Brock and Jim. He made the eddy but then started floating out the back of it. While Brock and Jim watched in horror/interest, Boris ran the second part of the rapid with no instruction. He did great! Dawn had the vehicles down by the take out and we hustled back to camp for lunch. We were trying to get to the Freestyle finals with the Women K1 at 3:00 and the Men K1 at 4:00. We put on at 2:00 and did not dilly dally. A quick bust out of McCoys, no scouting allowed, with minimal play we were off on the flat water death march. While we got there around 4pm, the men's final was already over. I guess they didn't see the need to

wait for Team Vermont. From all accounts there were over 1,000 folks on the side of the river taking it all in! For those keeping score at home, this is how it all shook out:

OC1	Andrew Hill	Canada
C1	Dane Jackson	United States
K1 Women	Emily Jackson	United States
K1 Men	Dane Jackson	United States

Damn, those Jackson kids are good! We continued downstream through all the meaty Main rapids – Lauren, Butchers Knife, Norman and Coliseum. As memory serves (which is always sketchy) it was a great run by all on a nice warm Ontario evening. In another amazing timing coincidence, Dawn, Sue, Melanie and Kala got to the take out at the very moment we pull up. And they have a cooler full of beer. They are our favorite people! We head back to camp with smiles on our faces. Exhausted smiles, but smiles just the same. There were many stories of the day’s event. I think at one point Brock mentioned that he had won one of the freestyle events! The stars were in full bloom and we all hit the hay a bit early.

Sunday, September 6, 2015...River Level: -1.0

The Team opts for a Middle Channel start and we were on the river by 10am! Kerry and Melanie were looking to hit the road back to Vermont and didn’t want to start too late. At McCoys, Boris looked to run the right sneak but bit off a bit more of Phil’s than he planned. Brock tried the standard “thread the needle” line and caught a face full of Phil. The Middle was a frolicking good time as always. Back to Pet Haven Base Camp for lunch. We see Kerry and Melanie off. Now the gender lines are starting to even out with four to four (counting mascots of course). The Boys (Boris, Brock, Paul & Jim) and Sarah put in at The Lauren for a shortened Main run. Another beautiful Canadian evening for paddling. Sun hanging low in the sky and in the 80’s. Then around Normans a big ol’ thunderstorm blows through. Made Normans and Coliseum a bit more intimidating, like that’s really necessary! All I remember about Coliseum is fighting to get my line after the big center hole only to find Brock’s helmet (with head and body attached) right in the slot I was looking to run! So I needed to come up with a Plan B! And like quickly. It all worked out for the best and we got Brock packaged up before Dog Leg. The flat water slog after Black’s did not seem too bad. Everyone was thinking the same thing. Tonight is Tequila Night! We got to the take out and again there was a welcoming committee and they brought cold beer! Man, I could get used to this! So back to base camp and the tequila started to flow. There were many stories, some exaggerated and some not, OK, all were exaggerated! Don’t have too many memories but I do have a vague recollection of a light saber fight with Paul...

Monday, September 7, 2015...River Level: -1.0

In the morning Brock mentioned that tequila has a smaller footprint than beer. I thought he was talking about the footprint inside his groggy head. But he was talking about picking up a few tequila bottles is easier than twenty or thirty beer cans. OK, that makes

sense now. Over breakfast a plan was hatched. Brock, Sarah and Jim would hit the Main. Paul and Sue would head down the Middle. Boris and Dawn would provide shuttle services and then Boris would hit the road for his ten hour drive home to New Jersey. We cleared McCoys. Brock had his first ever successful "thread the needle" run!!! We do not need to go into how the rest of the rapid went. At the critical juncture where the Middle and Main split, Sarah says "I wouldn't mind another Middle run". Brock concurs and Team Vermont stays together for the Middle. Once again, Dawn is at the take out only moments before we arrive. Only no beer this time. Then it is time to hit the showers and grab some lunch. A quick tear down of camp and we were all on the road by 2pm. Another Ottawa trip for the ages!

West River Release

Saturday Oct 10, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Brock R, Jamie D, Kyle H, Jim P also seen Ben S, Catharine HS, Jordan V, Sarah C, Max M

C1: Tony Shaw

Inflatable: Eric B

Organizer: Army corp of engineers

Difficulty: intermediate WW

Level: medium

Author: Brock

Jim and Dawn snuggled in their camper at Jamaica State Park awoke to what they assumed was Armageddon but was actually only Jamie and Kyle announcing their arrival at the ungodly early hour of 8AM demanding coffee. I arrived at the much more polite and civilised hour of 8:15 and was offered a much needed coffee by Dawn and we got ready to paddle.

We hit the shuttle around 9 and saw Eric and Tony pull into the lot. the star of our show Kyle Hibbard waited at the bridge while Jim Jamie and I hiked up. We knocked off the rust on our run down to meet Kyle. This was Kyle's first solid class III run and he styled it. Jamie showed him the lines and with the exception of one quick perfect roll it was a great run.

The next run kyle wanted to wait at the bridge again but I convinced him to head up with the old "you'll be fine" line. I was just hoping for someone other than me to swim but unfortunately he again had a perfect run. we ran into Sarah C and she led Kyle through the dumplings while Jamie shot pictures.

We ran into and saw many VPCers on our 4 runs. All were without incident except for one, what some in our group called a swim, but I prefer "walk in the water" as I never technically swam. Saw a lot of smiles and had a ball. It was great to see so many friends out having a blast. It was especially fun to share the day with Kyle who rocked his first West trip.

Gauleyfest 2015

Thursday-Tuesday Sep 17-22, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Ben Schott, Catharine(Hull) Schott

Organizer: Ben Schott

Difficulty: advanced WW

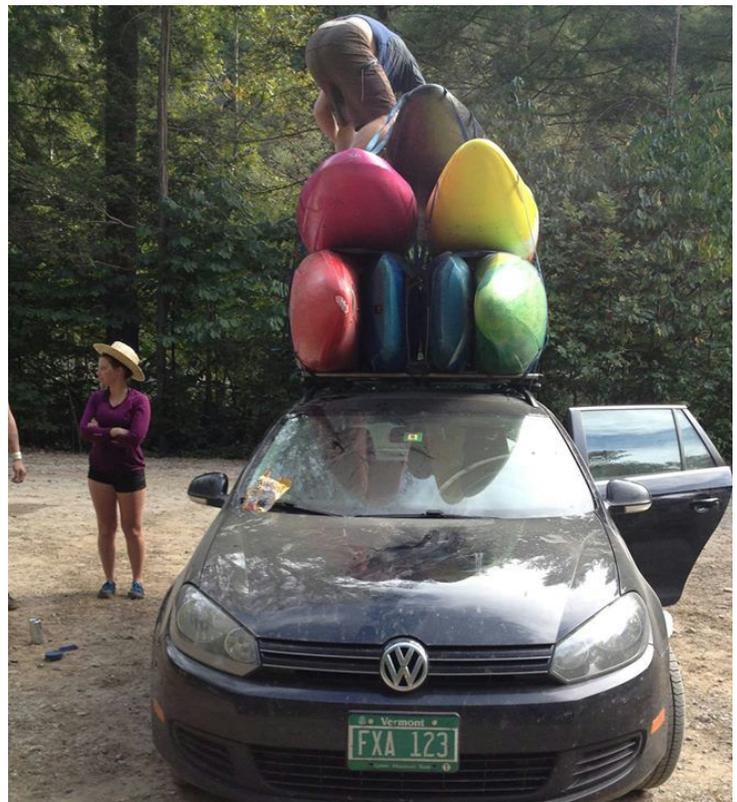
Level: medium

Author: Catharine (Hull) Schott

Ben and I ventured forth to MD and then WV all on our own this fall. We left VT on Thursday evening...I curled up in the back of the Volkswagen, sniffing, coughing, and generally feeling sorry for myself having just come down with a cold and come off three night shifts as Ben cheerily drove forth through the night. After 10 hours of sleeping for me, and 10 hours of driving for Ben we arrived in Friendsville MD. Thankfully the water for the Upper Yough doesn't turn on until 10 AM and it takes 2-3 hours to reach the put in, so there was time to catch a few hours sleep for Ben and a few more for me before chugging some Dayquil (me) and some beers (Ben) and putting on the river.

The water for the Yough was a gentle fall level of about 2 feet, and the warm water and 75 day made it hard not to smile. There was a feeling of generalized chaos as what seemed like a million kayakers and commercial as well as private rafts bombed down the tight lines. Aside from the one rapid I ran on my head and getting a little too friendly with the hole at National Falls, it was (thankfully) a fairly uneventful run.

We got off the river late in the afternoon, and started making our way south to Summersville WV. We got pulled into the giddy energy of Gauleyfest as we approached the grounds. There were hundreds of cars with boats on them and hundreds of grubby looking paddling folks of all ages. After a brief chat and a beer with Bob Nasdor (who was volunteering with the parking crew) about current affairs in NE boating we made our way into the fest. We connected with a Kayaking buddy of ours from Texas and a couple of his friends (yes, there is apparently WW in Texas, and quite possibly even 6 kayakers who live there). Saturday was an amazing day on the Upper Gauley. I had never run this section in my own boat, Ben vaguely remembered the lines for some of the rapids, and our small crew of Texans had no idea what was going on. There was a lot of boat scouting, eddy hopping, hoping, and yelling of last minute, on the fly beta in Texan accents. Thankfully there were



literally hundreds of other boaters on the river...If you weren't sure of where to go you could sit at the top of the rapid and watch how others fared (or failed) and choose your line from there.

We did opt to scout/watch the carnage/heckle/take a nap at Pillow Rock for an hour or so, and scout Iron Ring. We all survived the Gauley without major incident, and after hiking our boats about a 1/2 mile straight uphill to get to the car at the takeout we made our way back to the festival grounds and the party that awaited.

Ben and I spent 2 hours on Saturday evening volunteering at the back gate, selling bracelets. We discovered a great perk to the "no glass" rule at the fest...you get to drink the beers that you confiscate.

The Texas crew took off Sunday AM to begin their long trek home, and we headed back to the Gauley for more fun. This time, we got to paddle with a UVM student/friend of ours from Georgia as she took her virgin run down, and I got to try out a new to me Pink Karma that I had bought the night before. Although the release level was the same as the previous day, the rapids seemed significantly smaller and more manageable now that we had a better idea of where not to be on the river.

Sunday night, after a failed search for Chinese food (as it is tradition on Sunday's when paddling), we discovered an amazing Mexican restaurant in Summersville. We then slowly made our way back north to Friendsville for Yough round #2.

Monday was significantly less crowded on the Yough...The bright sun finally got overtaken by clouds and rain and I found myself thinking longingly of my drysuit that was in California getting repaired. Ben and I spent a low key day paddling with just the two of us. Ben took advantage of this time to give me some much needed pointers, and I was able to relax enough to play around and hone my skills.

After such a great 4 day weekend, we dragged our feet getting back to Vermont, and finally arrived home on Tuesday AM, feeling accomplished and tired.

One step ahead at Moosefest

Saturday-Sunday Oct 17-18, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Lots of people

Organizer: Fulton Lakes

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: medium

Author: Mike M

One of the great things about the Moose is that you can make it as tough or easy as you want. If you're looking for a fairly mellow, class IV- sort of day, you can scout and run sneak routes and maybe carry a few rapids, and still get plenty of quality boating in. If you're looking for class V, you can run the hard lines or go for obscure moves. Because of this, it's a great run for a mixed-ability group.

We had a big group on Saturday. The normal folks were there, but I was also pleased to see many folks who hadn't been here before, some of whom might consider the run something of a step up. The weather was chilly, but we otherwise had a great, relaxing

run. The level was just about perfect - somewhere between 3.5 and 4.0, and there wasn't a whole lot of real carnage. With the exception of a few minor incidents, everyone had good lines. A few of us even went back up for a second lap on the second half.

Typically, a Saturday evening at Moosefest is spent camping near the put-in, participating in various shenanigans. Everyone but myself decided to head for the party Old Forge, meaning that I spent the evening drinking freezing Mountain Brew in the dark. Jordan, much to my chagrin, on the other hand, won a brand new Sweet Protection drysuit in Old Forge.

The good news was Sunday morning was sunny and the temperature warmed up a bit. We cruised down to the first rapid, Fowlersville Falls, and a few of us ran it down the normal line on the left, sliding around the middle hole. There's a middle line, which is a tough ferry across the top, above the horrifying maw of that awful middle recirculation. I've never even really looked at it seriously. Anyways, a few of us were on a bit of schedule and decided to keep cruising downstream. Just as I was leaving, I took one last look upstream to see Jordan and Ben scouting the middle line.

This caused me great distress. How could I let Jordan out-do me like that? Running a line I had never even seriously considered? Jordan, a homeowner, devoted husband, collegiate basketball player, respected teacher, active member of the community, accomplished sportsman, responsible driver, soon to be father and my New Haven Race nemesis was going to resoundingly prove that he is a better paddler than myself. I felt as though I was on the brink of an abyss even Mountain Brew could not fill. I mean, for God's sake, the guy even has a rock on the New Haven named after him.

But it was not to be. I was not going to let Jordan Vickers steal kayaking from me. It was too late for Fowlersville, but I would step it up too. Heading downstream, I went for every boof, ferry or surf I could. I caught the tricky and nearly non-existing hero eddy in Funnel, routed the left line at Sureform blind and then sent the Alpine Line at Crystal.

The last rapid is Magilla, which has two lines, the easier (but still fun) right line, and the more intimidating one on the left, which I had scouted many, many times, but never run, until today. Mostly by chance, I had a great line. At the take-out, I was so elated I almost forgot why I ran it. All those times I scouted it and walked away, even after watching less experienced boaters run it and be fine! Done! Checked off the list! Heck yeah!

20 minutes later the rest of the group showed up. As it turned out everyone had enjoyed another nice mellow day and hadn't really looked at anything but the normal lines in most rapids. So I guess I'm safe for another year, and conveniently I actually had to do some real kayaking for a change. We even went up for a second lap, where Ben pinned at the brink of Magilla after making fun of me for running it only at a lowish level... but that was pretty harmless and he claims he was laughing the whole time.

Like I said, you can make the Moose into any kind of day you want.

Middlebury Gorge

Friday Nov 20, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Jordan V, Mike M, Justin B

Organizer: Group
Difficulty: advanced WW
Level: low boatable
Author: Jordan

We didn't get much rain in central VT but it was enough to bring the New Haven up for a few laps in the morning and luckily water held for an evening Middlebury Gorge. The Middlebury had been out of play for a while now since wood was everywhere after last winter. Several groups had gone in cleared the wood and word was it was good to go. Mike, Justin and I met at 3:15 and made our way up to the put in shortly after. The level was low but things channelize nicely. Having not been in there in a year it was nice to have the Birth Canal at a less pushy level. Above the North Branch confluence there were two large log jams we portaged around. Unless these get blown out it will be nice having them catch wood floating from upstream and hopefully keep wood out of the Birth Canal. The second one we were almost able to sneak on the right but we made quick work portaging, wanting to get down the Birth Canal with good light. Mike led the charge in the chunky lead in rapid and then over Fallopian. Everyone had good lines on Fallopian and we got out to scout Rebirth above Cunnilingus. Seeing it was good to go Mike ran the drop and got out to get a better look at Rebirth and gave us the thumbs up. Justin emphasized its important to leave at least one person above Cunnilingus until you see Rebirth has no wood. You can rope them out if necessary on river left otherwise you are trapped. Again Mike led the charge running rebirth nicely as Justin and I followed. Looking back upstream having just run the Birth Canal is in a word AWESOME! Once out of the inner gorge the light opened up and Justin got out in front. From their until Your Mom it was paddle hard and don't stop. Your Mom is now a beaver dam more or less that Justin had a nice line on and I had an awesome boof although a bit in the wrong direction and landed mostly rock. Still plenty of light down to the last rapid that has two large trees in it now. We were able to work around them but beware they could be hazardous. Finishing the run under the bridge everyone was grinning ear to ear. After an hour after we put on we were back at the car, making plans for the Green the next day.

Two November Green Releases...

Saturday-Saturday Nov 7 & 21, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Too many to list, in addition to the usual suspects...

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: low boatable

Author: Ryan

It's been a silly dry fall. The Mountain Biking has been limitless and the foliage primo. The West River and the ACoE gave us releases two weekends back to back, The Missisquoi at Sheldon Springs has been flowing in the bypass because the turbines are down for

maintenance and we asked Morrisville Water and Light for a couple of releases that they came through on for us.

Getting a release from MWL on the Green is no easy feat. Not that MWL doesn't want to give us a release, but the 80 year old dam is beyond its design life and the penstocks are finicky and have a mind of their own... meaning they will kick off from time to time without being prompted. This spring we had a scheduled release and they shut down before we ever made it to the put in.

With John Tilton at the helm for dam operations, he fired up the release the night before and checked it in the morning to verify it was still flowing on the 7th. We had 22 folks show up to run the river and before we knew it we had a group of 22 folks running one of the smaller micro-creeks in VT together. It was fun if not chaotic. Everyone was running good lines and smiling. We got to the bottom and rallied for a second run. Got to the top and found the put in high and dry - the turbines had kicked off and we were out of water. It was a fantastic day with smiles and high fives all around.

November 21 we got MWL to give us another day of releases. the caveat was the same - we'll do what we can to give you a release, but it may kick off unexpectedly. we found out later that It did kick off that morning for about 30 minutes and fortunately John was in Morrisville that morning to flip it back on for us. We all had noticed a dip in levels while on the water for our first run, but nothing significant. Most of the folks gave it one run and done. Myself and Justin Worth cracked our boats on the first run, but found Jordan had a heat gun so we found an outlet and welded the boats up to join a group for their third run. with water levels higher than run one, lines were smoothed out and boofs were grabbed like champs. We cleaned the run in just over an hour. Looking to head up for one final run, we got to the put in and had noticed the water was considerably lower than it should be for a run. Looks like it had tripped off again on us.

We looped the car around and headed to the take out to pack up gear and beat feet to Lost Nation for some local brew and grub.

Having the Green in our back pocket for runs when all else is dried up is a great wild card to have. It's a super high quality run with lots of rapids to work and more character than can be written up about.

Stay tuned for the next release. You just never know - there may be a few more in 2015 if our weather patterns continue to hold warm and pleasant....

A window of things to come...

Wednesday Sep 30, 2015

Participants:

Kayak: Ryan M & Justin W

Organizer: Ryan

Difficulty: advanced WW

Level: low boatable

Author: Ryan

If there aren't any pictures then it didn't happen, right? Then this didn't happen. But if it were to have happened, then this is how it may have gone down.....

Like most of my recent boating escapades of 2015, it starts with what seems like the same email title I've seen from the same group all year (because it is the same email). "Looks like Rain", and what follows is the atmospheric babble that someone has mashed together about how the NWS has said the storm will be more intense in NVT or there will be a longer duration cycle in SVT or the storm is a wrap-a-round and we are going to NH. Ultimately the New Haven runs and most folks stick to the usual suspects. That is good, I wish I was closer to get on that run more often due to its high quality rapids.

Unfortunately I don't live that close to the Champlain Valley. But in VT there are a lot of boaters out there in the woodwork and there are a few boaters over on this side of the Greens that have a similar bend for exploratory boating on brooks that may or may not give up the goods.

So with a storm predicted for mid week, the email comes in and it is a mish-mash of responses of where folks are looking to go boating... I have a busy day of work, but it's been way too long since I had been on the water, so had planned to skate out of work by noon. The rain had come down hard over night and things were popping around CVT. In comes the text from what seems to be my go-to guy for 2015. Justin Worth is up early and his his standard 3 word "you boating today" text comes through around 5:15 am. "Yup" is my response. So all morning we are back and forth on where and when. Finally we agree to meet at my place back in Montpelier... We can hit the NBW or head up to the Gihon or something else that way if our initial plan of chasing down some obscure Micro-creeks doesn't pan out. Initial goal is something branch of something river in some vt drainage.... But we get distracted driving up Route 12 out of Montpelier (the center of the northern New England whitewater universe). Looking at the painted gauge in Putnamville, it reads a level of runnable for the NBW. Hmmm what to do.

We head up 12 to Hancock brook road and I show Justin the last drop on Hancock Brook, I can see his eyes popping with excitement as he says it looks like it goes. It's actually flowing at a decent level to make all sections marginally runnable, or so it seems. We head up the road getting a look at all of the drops up to Hampshire Hill Road. I've been wanting to run Hancock for years from an old Mountain Cabin partially up Worcester Mountain. Off we go, my truck in 4wd low, we crawl up an old double track to the cabin. The flow is low, probably too low, but we are there and anxious to boat. It's going to be bone-zoning from this high up today, but we need to see what it's about up on the mountain.

It took us an our to make it down to the Worcester Mountain Trailhead (about 1/2 mile in distance) the river is braided and there are a fair amount of strainers in this section. Not worth the abuse I put my truck through, boat through or Justin through. We did get to see a stretch of river that isn't seen very often. Once down on the brook to approximately where the Worcester Mountain Trail parking area is things got lively and much better. It started off with a really cool boulder/bedrock rapid dog leg thing that led into three really sweet bedrock slides above the culvert that goes under Hampshire Hill Road.

Hampshire Hill Road Culvert sets you off down the rabbit hole in earnest with a rocking 4-5' boof. into a very steep rapid that is severely undercut on the right. Below this

steep rapid, the river has been run in fits and starts. In October of 2010, I was on this stretch during a high water event with Packie, Kelly and Guttridge. Without a doubt the fastest I've ever moved in a boat. So at this low water level that Justin and I were running it, it was interesting to see what was creating the features that we were dodging and flying through in 2010. It's a tight and substantial brook for sure.... one of the steepest in VT in excess of 300ft/mile.

Justin and I were running out of daylight and water fast so we shifted to turbo mode hoping we would get down to the bottom section of drops before darkness. Below the 8' slide at the midway point, we thought we would be in a cobble strewn channel, however, we were pleased to find it was still giving way to quality bedrock rapids.

We made it down to the top of the bottom section before it became fully dark. That coupled with really low water and the brook being shrouded in a full hemlock forest, meant we needed to make a smart move and pull the plug on our mission.

We unfortunately didn't get the bottom 6 drops on our run due to early darkness, but we definitely had a great run. Those bottom drops run a lot more regularly than the rest of the river, so we'll be back for them, especially the bottom teacups.

It's always fun to try out a new run from time to time... Running obscure micros though are a totally different animal. Its along the same lines of poking at a new ski line you saw from the highway but aren't sure if it will go, an unknown MTB trail that you spotted veering off of the beaten single track, or a new slab of rock that may yield a new crag to climb. Its exploratory, it's exciting and if you are lucky you have a new run to add to your arsenal of go-tos. If you aren't lucky, well then you had a great mission with your boating partner exploring something new.

So - maybe the Hancock Brook top to bottom mission happened or maybe it didn't. But if you ask Justin about it, look at his eyes when he starts to describe the rapids, the painful first 1/2 mile, the awesome bedrock, strainers, boofs and lack of daylight and water. The truth will be there.....pictures or not.

Justin is moving to MO the end of this year and will be sorely missed around the VT boating scene. I'll be looking for a mission go-to partner. If you think you can handle some losers with the winners, give me a shout. I've got a running list of obscure runs that I want to tick off. You never know what you may find.... We found the Green that way, folks found Kennfield and the Basin that way, folks found Waterman that way.... There are more - and it's always so much better to share that experience with a partner on the river than solo. Because if there aren't any pictures it doesn't happen, unless it's shared in the memories of the folks that ran it.

Until the next rabbit hole.....

