



ETWC NEWSLETTER MARCH 2015

PROMOTE canoeing and kayaking as a water sport
TEACH boating techniques and water safety for river travel
PRESERVE our remaining wilderness rivers for future generations



If you have not paid your dues, please do!

If you want to pay online, fill out the form [HERE](#)

Or, Send Kary your \$15 check payable to ETWC along with the membership form at the end of this newsletter to:

Club Meeting

Tuesday, April 14,
2015 7:30 pm at:

Our speaker will be distinguished adventurer and our club president, Ian Anderson. Ian is going to talk about his latest trip with photos of an 8 day trek in Simien Mountain National park in Ethiopia. Spectacular scenery unlike anywhere else on earth.

The club house is at the top of the hill within Greystone Apts on Solway Rd ½ mile from Hardin Valley Rd.

We will also meet and eat before the meeting at Grill Don Gallos on Hardin Valley Rd, 6pm. Call IAN 865-382-5723 if you want to come eat so he can save you a spot.

2015 OFFICERS

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Please keep your dues up to date!

If you want to pay online via PayPal, fill out the form at:
http://www.etwcweb.com/concrete/membership/online_form
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ETWC
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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - 7TH OF EACH MONTH

Newsletter Editor: Bill Lewis
 Phone: 865-387-7821 Email: bill.lewis865@gmail.com
 Photos in jpeg, gif, or bmp format.
 Reports and Classifieds as a Word or Text File Document.
 Check out our website at <http://www.etwcweb.com>

River Gauges, see ETWC Forum
[AWW What's Running in East Tennessee](#)

ETWC Kayak School, June 1 thru 6.

Ken Schneider is again heading up our Kayak clinic scheduled for June 1 thru 6. Ken will need volunteers and equipment again; so, please let him know if you can help. A flyer is attached, so, let's start spreading the word.

NPS Obed W&SR Morgan County Elementary Schools Outdoors program.

ETWC has supported the National Park Service's Obed Wild & Scenic River unit for the past 3 years by supplying volunteers for the boating portion of the program that they put on for all of the 6th Grade classes in Morgan County. This year's program will be held on weekdays between May 11 and May 20, and we are again looking for volunteers. Please consider volunteering for a day or more.

Each day a bus will arrive at Lilly Bridge around 9 a.m. with students from one school. They are divided into two groups, and one group goes rock climbing while the other group goes to the water program. We help the NPS Rangers fit helmets and PFDs on the students before they carry the NPS provided boats and paddles to a pool below Lilly Bridge. The first activity is usually the popular "Critters in the Creek" program by NPS personnel that involves the students capturing and identifying the animals in Clear Creek – and thus proving how unpolluted the water is.

After the Critters program, we help put the students into the NPS boats before we get into our own boats and gear to paddle with them in the pool. We limit instruction to the minimum required for safety – the emphasis is for the students to have FUN. If time and the weather permits, we let the students go for a brief swim in the upstream end of the pool. Each group is accompanied by at least one teacher who can handle any discipline issues – but we have had none.

Around noon we break for lunch, and then switch groups and repeat the activities. When we finish, the students carry the boats and paddles back up the hill before leaving to return to school around 3 p.m. We then assist the NPS Rangers in sorting and loading their equipment onto their trucks and trailer.

If you have any free time available, please consider this activity. You will be very impressed by the 6th Graders and teachers of Morgan County, and every session has been fun for all.

Please call Billy Bob or Kary at 865-483-7525 to volunteer, or for more information on this award winning program.

River Clean-Ups, volunteers needed to assist

We have several river clean-ups in April and we need all the help we can get.

NPS Obed W&SR

Burnt Mill Bridge Saturday, April 4th.

Burnt Mill Bridge is the last put-in/take-out above the confluence with the Big South Fork. See attached flyer for information.

Fourth Annual Obed Cleanup/Float Trip – Saturday, March 28, 2015 **CANCELLED**

This will likely be rescheduled; so, stay tuned.

Second Annual Big South Fork Cleanup/Float Trip – Saturday, April 11, 2015

On Saturday, April 11 Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning and the National Park Service will sponsor the second annual whitewater rafting/clean-up trip at the Big South Fork of the Cumberland. Weather and water permitting we will travel from Burnt Mill Bridge to Leatherwood Ford and retrieve trash along the river. Paddlers are needed to serve as safety boaters and to help transfer trash from the riverbank to the rafts. There are also seats available in the rafts; however, be sure and let them know if this is your desire to make sure you have a seat. This is the most rugged and scenic part of the Big South Fork gorge with some of the biggest rapids, including Double Falls, Washing Machine, The Ell, Rion's Eddy, Jake's Hole, and O & W Rapid. The scenic values of the gorge are of the highest order. Paddlers must be 18 years old or over and have a moderately high level of physical fitness and stamina. The difficulty level of this outing is high, and participants are encouraged to consider carefully their skills, fitness, and stamina before signing up.

For more information or to pre-register, please contact Sandra Goss at 865-583-3967 or via email at Sandra@sandrakgoss.com. The pre-registration deadline is April 6.

ETWC Chattooga Trip 2015 May 22, 23 & 24

This is a repeat from February's newsletter; however, if you want to reserve a spot, you'd better hurry. You won't want to miss this overnight trip that has something for everyone from beginner to expert paddler. The Chattooga River that flows between South Carolina and north Georgia is a National Wild and Scenic River and one of the premier whitewater rivers of the southeast. For many years ETWC had an annual overnight trip to paddle the Chattooga, and we revived this tradition over Memorial Day weekend last year.

As a Wild and Scenic River there are regulations to be followed to preserve the resource, and Section I is only for trout fishing and hiking, Section II is for beginners to intermediates, Section III is for intermediates and is probably a notch above the Nantahala and a whole lot warmer. Section III ends at "Bull Sluice" an optional Class 4-5 rapid which can be easily portaged. Section IV is only for experienced paddlers with completely dependable rolls and excellent boat control. There is also a run for intermediates that we call "Section 3 1/2" that repeats the end of Section III and goes to Woodall Shoals which we may do if there is enough interest. We will have trip leaders for all sections and will paddle both Saturday and Sunday.

Note: This overnight trip is offered for whitewater paddlers who are members of East Tennessee Whitewater Club, and should be considered one of the benefits of Club Membership. Please consider participation as a privilege for members of ETWC who want to be part of one of the best whitewater experiences available in the southeast. Please understand that the trip leaders and most of the experienced paddlers who join them are volunteering their time and expertise and are happy to assist other members to join in this adventure. That said, you should also understand that non-paddlers should not be invited as they could displace one of our regular members who would like to take advantage of this paddling opportunity. Your safety, and the safety of every member on the trip depends upon the trip leader and assistants, and these volunteers should not have their attention diverted by nonmembers who do not have the necessary skills.

We will stay at Oconee State Park in Mountain Rest, South Carolina in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Oconee is located on State Rt. 107 south of Highlands and Cashiers, NC and east of Clayton GA (U.S. 441). This is a scenic area, remote from shopping centers and fast food, but the state park has lots of amenities: Cabins,

Camping, Lake Swimming, Volleyball, Hiking, Biking, Campstore, and last but not least, Miniature Golf. Please go online for details about Oconee, the cabins , camping, and the Chattooga River.

Kary Bob has booked a couple of cabins which are available on a first-come basis for club members only by contacting Kary Bob.

For complete details email trip leader Ted Buel at gtdesigns1@yahoo.com.

CLEAR CREEK, 3/21/15 JETT TO NEMO AT 2.3' AT JETT GAUGE.

Bill Lewis



Left to right, Kirk Beckendorf, Rick Zingg, Ian Anderson, and Tom Pritchard, on the "lunch rock" Clear Creek 3/21/15.

About this time of year we winter-weenies begin to stick our heads out of our nice warm dens. We've been reading about the exploits of our cold water buddies for the past four months and the warm sunshine creates a yearning for that whitewater adrenalin rush. Early in the week I could see the weather shaping up for a beautiful weekend while Clear Creek was moving toward a good warm up level. I sent out an APB looking for a trip and hoping someone was running Clear Creek. Rick came through and we put together a great trip. I met Kirk, Rick, and Ian at the Ranger station, and when Tom pulled up, it sealed the deal; we were going all the way to Nemo. This would be Ian's first time on Lilly to Nemo; so, we left a car at Lilly in case he wasn't feeling it. This was Kirk's first time as well; however, he was a seasoned paddler and had no problems in his playboat. We put in at Jett and the level was 2.3' on the gauge. All agreed that this was a good first time or warm up level. We had no problems on this section and used the time to warm up and work on fundamentals. When we reached Lilly, Ian was feeling pretty cocky and was ready to take on the gorge. After a short break we set sail for Jack's rock. We took our time and Rick and Tom led the way explaining the lines as we went. We ran the big 3; Jack's Rock, Camel Rock, and Wooten's Folly without any problems. Ian was doing great as we closely followed the lines of Rick and Tom. The river wasn't too pushy at this level and a lot of fun, perfect for a first time trip. Between Wooten's Folly and the Obed both Ian and I had a couple of combat rolls. I was playing around trying to paddle across the face of a big rock and ended up pinning and flipping upstream... when will I learn "hug the rock". Lucky it wasn't undercut and it just pushed me around the side. I was too loose in the boat and came out of my seat as I bounced off some rocks. I had to let go of the paddle with one hand and pull myself back into my knee braces before I could roll. A valuable lesson, stay tight in that boat. I'm afraid I had it adjusted for lazy boy mode.

The gorge is probably the most beautiful section of river I've paddled. Between the rapids we just had to lay back and look up at the stone cliffs overhanging the river as we enjoyed the scenery and the beautiful day. I have to say that I've yet to experience anything to match the scenery in these deep river canyons on the plateau.

We reached the take out around 5pm and Ian was walking kind of cocky as he carried his boat to the car with a big smile on his face. He'd had a great day and it was a great day for all of us. Thanks to Rick and Tom for leading the way!

CUOTR!

Bill Lewis

Skills

SEAL LAUNCH AS A BOATING SKILL

(By Teresa Gryder)

Why on earth would a person get in a boat and shove themselves off a cliff? It seems insane at first. On Grand Canyon trips you may see young men haul their boats up onto high shelves of rock, and fall dangerously far down to the calm waters below. Recently on the North Umpqua I followed Stephen up a tall rock to do this myself. He launched first, and I followed with my sprayskirt hastily attached, and found myself below with a boat full of water. All Stephen's fault, I said.

The canoeist will say "Yep, that's why I don't do seal launches." OK, don't. This may be only for decked boats. On the other hand, no matter what your craft you may someday find yourself in a place where the easiest way back into the river involves launching off a shelf. Maybe portaging a gnarly rapid in some basalt gorge. A few portages come to mind that are definitely easiest to do by dropping in: Big Fluffy on Opal Creek, Gorilla on the Green Narrows, BZ falls on the White Salmon...there are many. If you are a conservative boater and choose to portage the big ones, you will find that there are lots of places that lack a civilized launch beach. Being able to slide your boat over an edge and land in the river with some semblance of control and predictability is a skill worth having.

So we practice, falling over edges to get familiar with how it works. There is no better way to learn than the hard way. When you have made the mistake, you don't forget. I made one of the commonest mistakes early on. It was the 1980's and we were running the Flying V gorge of the Salt River in Arizona, a legendary class V gorge that was strictly verboten, but not very well supervised. We had sneaked to the put-in by starlight because the Apaches don't like any white eyes up there. We slept next to our kayaks under a juniper. At first light we packed our sleeping bags in our boats and set off downstream. The run was 25 miles in length and the water was low. We didn't know if we could do it in a day.

We made 7 portages that day, and finished at last light without getting scalped. On one portage we carried our boats along a level rock shelf on the left bank as the river fell away beneath us. When we reached the end of the rapid, the water was a good twenty feet down from our shelf. The water was green and deep, and just over three boatlengths straight down. It seemed obvious that we should get in our kayaks and plop in.

There was no race to go first but I did. The edge was rather too square, and I didn't exactly like the looks of it, but there didn't seem to be another option. I had been off some twelve foot waterfalls but nothing twenty feet tall. I had no idea what was going to happen.

I inched forward in my kayak, sitting on a flat shelf. When the boat started to teeter over the edge I went with it. While I was falling my kayak and I rotated forward steadily, and I landed flat upside down. The boat hit the water really hard, and I almost passed out. I felt really dizzy and weird. I think if my eyes had been open I still wouldn't have been able to see or hear anything. Thankfully my mammalian reflexes kept me from inhaling any water until I came to my senses again, and rolled up.

I was fine, but in hindsight that could have been the end of me. The water was slowly tracking into another rapid, and my buddies and their boats were up on a cliff over my head. If I had passed out, only they could have saved me, and they faced the same obstacle that had got me. After that I had a much greater respect for what can go wrong with a seal launch, and also for its usefulness. On the river most every option has risk, and we choose among risks by personal standards. Seal launching might seem ridiculous when done without need, but one day it could be the safest option.

Seal launching is a lot like running waterfalls, but without the fluid stuff to grab with your paddle, and without the hole at the bottom. It's the bones of running waterfalls, without the flesh. It might seem safer or easier, but it isn't. The fluid stuff helps. It gives you something to hold on to with your paddle, and a soft landing in bubbly water. It reduces your odds of over-rotating. It takes some forethought and presence of mind to pull off a seal launch from dry rock.

There are only a few components to concern yourself with. I learned the hard way that the edge really matters. Pick your edges well. And you need a place that a boat can perch while someone gets in it and ready. Getting all the way ready is pretty important, too. Sprayskirt, noseclip, pogies, paddle. Check. And of course you want a clean landing zone.

When there's no stable spot lined up with a perfect launching edge, we help each other. Helping usually involves holding a boat in position until the paddler is put together and ready to go. Sometimes the helper will shove a boat off the edge, but it's pretty important to let each person launching decide for themselves if they want a push or not. If I'm assisting someone I ask them "You want a push?" and if they say no, I stand back with hands in the air for deniability. I realize now that a push can reduce the tendency of a boat to over-rotate, as I did in my first 20 footer. Live and learn.

Let's think a little harder about that edge, since it is so important. The best edge for seal launching is something that ramps you down to the water so that your landing is smooth. Sometimes you slide some distance down the rock before you launch, and that can be better than a push because it is predictable: you know what gravity does. The portage seal launches at BZ and Gorilla are like this: there's a spot where you can comfortably get in your boat and put together. Then you slide down the rock to an edge which spits you into the river in a good location. There is no teetering involved. There is forward momentum. These are good clues.

Sometimes, a seal launch edge doesn't have a slide option. You are in your boat, right at the edge. You don't want to teeter onto your head like I did. There is an additional way to take control as you go over the edge. You can take a stroke on bare rock. You might be able to reach forward from your stable spot and find a paddle-hold. You hook the blade on the rock, and then pull enough to project outward and place your bow exactly where you want. If there was water you'd call this stroke a boof stroke.

To get started moving people often will use one hand, with the other hand on the paddle. Sometimes you can have both hands on the paddle and get started over the edge just by scooching your weight. However you get started, you need both hands on the paddle as you go past the edge so you can take your rock stroke, and so that you can brace or roll if needed at the bottom.

Some people make a big deal about your body english while you are in the air. There is the idea that by bringing your body forward you pull the bow upward. I'm not a big fan of this theory, though there are other reasons to position your body forward. Your back is more stable when your lower core is engaged. I have been told "belly button over junk" and it works for launching or for running rapids. When that core is active you are balanced and ready to paddle. It is somewhat instinctive to lean back, and landing too flat with a backward lean can cause slipped discs and other Bad Things. It requires concentration to keep your body positioned well for the landing, and no backband can do it for you. Generally you want to land with your body in a strong erect or forward posture and your elbows up to keep from banging them on the boat (don't ask me how I know this). The forces are smaller on low seal launches, so practice small.

The last variable is the landing. Momentum and the rock edge determine the boat's trajectory through the air which dictates angle of entry. The landing zone could be shallow or full of jagged rocks or submerged trees. It could be fast or swirly water, or very calm "green" water. When the water is muddy it can be really hard to guess its depth. Investigate however you can. Poke around with a long stick. Send a probe. If you don't like the way they land, try something else. You want to land right for the particular situation you are in. Too flat can hurt your back, and too steep increases your odds of hitting the bottom or landing on your head. Somewhere in between is better, say a boat angle at impact of 45 degrees for a ten foot launch. There are more options. If you really don't like the seal launch option and you can't walk or climb down to the water, you can Throw and Go. This is when you toss your boat over the edge, then jump in after it and swim it to a spot where you can get back in. If the drop is too far even for jumping, you can rappel down.

These tips are only a start. Start small if you have any choice. Sliding in off a 5 foot drop is a good way to get the feel of it. Each additional foot of height adds significant force to the system, so caution is advised. Find a favorable edge and a deep spot, and take the plunge just to see what will happen. Take a deep breath, and take your time. The river isn't pushing you. Push off the rock with your paddle as needed, pull your belly forward while you fall, and keep your elbows off the deck. Using these tips you have fair to middlin' odds of getting into the water without trouble. If you do land wildly, at least you'll be ready to brace.

The only way to get good at seal launching is to do it. We can understand the concepts, but without practice the pieces are hard to put together under pressure. When we make mistakes, it drives the lessons home. There are many mistakes to make. You can launch before you are

ready, land too flat, piton on the bottom, hit your elbows on the deck, hurt your back or shoulder on landing, or embarrass yourself by swimming in the flatwater.

The more different rivers you explore, the more different skills you develop. Being able to seal launch is just one trick in a great big bag full. Compared to the rapid that we are portaging, dropping off a little cliff into relatively calm water below can sometimes be the conservative option.

Photos by me

Seal Launch at "Crack in Earth"



ETWC Forum

Check out the discussions on our forum:

<http://etwcweb.com/discuss/>

Roll Practice 8:30pm Friday Nights, Oak Ridge Civic Center Pool

DATE

4/3/2015
4/10/2015

NAME

No roll practice.
NEED VOLUNTEER!

4/17/2015
4/24/2015

NEED VOLUNTEER!
Kary Scarborough

Trip Reports!

Spring is nearing and we want to tell everyone about our winter trips. Send trip reports to Bill, including videos if you have them!

Please send reports to Yours Truly at bill.lewis865@gmail.com.

And, Thank You AGAIN, **Teresa Gryder** for all of your articles on safety along with all of my other contributors. Thanks so much!

PROGRAMS

We are always looking for interesting programs for our meetings. If you have a program or an idea please contact Donna Price at 865-406-1058.

