

ETWC NEWSLETTER APRIL 2019

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

Club Meeting

Next Club Meeting

Tuesday, April 23, 2019 7:30 pm at the Casual Pint on Hardin Valley Rd.

We plan to show the NPS video on the Obed Wild and Scenic River. The video touches on most aspects of the park with a pretty heavy emphasis on kayaking. So, you may see some familiar faces (or yellow helmets).

We will also meet and eat before the meeting at Grill Don Gallos on Hardin Valley Rd, 6pm. Call Mark 865-679-9242 if you want to come eat so he can save you a spot.

If you have not paid your dues...

Send Kary your \$15 check payable to ETWC along with the membership form at the end of this newsletter to the address on the form, or go to our web site at:

<http://etwcweb.com/membership/> and you can pay online.

Also, if you are an American Whitewater member, or would like to be, you can join or renew your membership at:

<https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-aw/>

We are an AW affiliate club; so you're annual membership is only \$25.

2019 ETWC Officer vacancies

We elected our 2019 officers at the Christmas Party meeting: however, we still have some openings. We are looking for volunteers to serve as Trip Coordinator, Roll Practice coordinator, and Conservation. Please contact any of our officers if you can serve in these roles.

Upcoming Events:

This is a repeat from last month. We still need volunteers for the Morgan County 6th Graders Program. Call Billy Bob if you can help.

The National Park Service's Obed Wild & Scenic River unit is again sponsoring their Morgan County 6th Graders program this May. The program was the subject of the last ETWC meeting, and was presented by NPS Ranger Veronica Greear. This will be the 8th year for this award winning NPS program. In the program, students from each of the 6th grade classes in Morgan County go to Lilly Bridge to do rock climbing and boating. ETWC has assisted the NPS in gathering volunteers for the water portion of the program, and we are again looking for boaters. This year's program will run on weekdays between May 13 and May 22, with May 22 as a potential rain date.

Each day volunteers are needed around 8:30 to help the NPS Rangers unload boats and gear before the bus arrives at Lilly Bridge around 9 a.m. with students from one school.

The students 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 aquatic life 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 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 can spare a day or more, please consider volunteering for this activity. You will be very impressed by the 6th Graders and teachers of Morgan County, and every session has been fun for all.

To volunteer, please call Billy Bob or Kary at 865-483-7525 (leave a message on the answering machine) or by email to Bill_Scarborough@msn.com .

ETWC Kayaking Clinic:

This year's clinic is coming up on June 3, and culminating on June 8 on the Hiwassee. Format is similar to the past with classes beginning at 6pm and ending around dark. Francis Ruppel is our coordinator again this year and Francis is seeking both instructors and students. If you can help, contact Francis at (865) 332-7725 or fruppel@knology.net.

A flyer is attached to this newsletter and we ask you to spread these around at outdoors shops, work places, and to your friends.

Our clinic is the life blood of our club and historically has been how we grow the club as well as our leadership. We have several enthusiastic new members from last years class and it's been such a joy to watch them develop. Encourage those adventurous friends of yours to share this wonderful sport that we love so much and want to share..

Sign up link is: <http://etwcweb.com/clinic-registration/>

Annual Volunteer Clean-up & Appreciation Event Sat., April 20, 2019

This is an enjoyable event and shows our appreciation to the park volunteers and rangers for their work to make this wonderful park the amazing place that it is. Meet at the Ranger station in Wartburg at 8:30am to team up and disperse throughout the park to help the rangers with clean ups and fix ups. Return to the visitor Center for lunch.. Details at link below:

<https://www.nps.gov/obed/learn/news/annual-volunteer-clean-up-appreciation-event-sat-apr-20-2019.htm>

An optional side trip to The Lilly Pad may be in order!

Tennessee Mountain Laurel Festival

The Tennessee Mountain Laurel Festival which will be held on Saturday, May 18, 2019 from 10am to 5pm on the square in Wartburg. There will be several new events this year. Our club has participated in the past and it's a great celebration of the outdoors in the Morgan County "Mountain Laurel" area. See:

<https://www.tennesseemountainlaurelfestivalmoco.com/>

Cheers to Clean Water

We are a sponsor for the Clean Water Tennessee River Paddle Off on June 9, 2019 from 1-4pm at Suttree Landing Park in Knoxville. This event shows ways that we can help to protect our local streams and rivers with green infrastructure! Our \$250 donation entitles us to our Logo being included in event publications, and entry in the River Race/Float. It sounds like a great opportunity to show off what a whitewater boat can do. All proceeds go to support Tennessee Storm Water Association.

ROLL PRACTICE

Our final winter roll practice will be at the Oak Ridge pool on Friday 4/26 8:30pm. We move to the lake beginning Friday May 3, 2019 at 5:30pm and will continue there on most Fridays throughout the summer.

Kary will be coordinating Friday Indoor Roll practice, cost is \$5 for adults, \$3 for 18 and under and is used to pay the pool rental. Summer practice at the lake is free.

As usual this is described in detail on our website at: <http://etwcweb.com/roll-practice/>

Thanks to our webmaster April Morton!

TRIP REPORTS

Editor's note: This report actually dates back a few years; it's too good not to run again. It's a great example of a true "Wilderness" trip.

Tatsheshini River (the Tat) Trip

By Kirk Beckendorf

(Good luck in Washington Kirk, we'll miss you!)

Sitting under a tarp in front of my tent as the slow steady rain soaks the black spruce boreal forest, along the east bank of the Nenana River. Across the river is Denali Nat. Park. I have been hanging out and kayaking here for the past couple of weeks. I see a couple walking through the trees towards me.

Coffee? I ask, as I reach for the blackened pot, balanced on a rock at the edge of my campfire. Sure. Are you Kirk? Yep..... I'm Ray, and I'm Stephanie- Jim tells us you are looking to do a long river trip.

The **Tatsheshini River (the Tat)** is our goal. Put in-somewhere in the Yukon; takeout- Glacier Bay, Alaska- two weeks later. The shuttle includes a flight via bush plane. Billed as one of the most spectacular river trips in the world.

Call Gulf Air- they can't fly out my kayak- Plan A.... but they give me the number of a company who can.. for \$1600.00- Plan B. Go to Plan C. Borrow a raft- but that will take an extra flight with Gulf Air for \$550.00. Plan D- Buy a Sevylor Tahiti for \$100 (inflatable kayak) (alias- rubber ducky). It may still take an extra flight. Oh well... I'll chance it, Plan D it is.

Drive two days down the Al-Can Hwy to the put-in. Rig boats- Ray and Stephanie's 14 foot raft and my rubber ducky. A leisurely evening beside the campfire along the Tat. Why don't I get excited about trips anymore- I should be excited?

Drive both vehicles to Haines, leave Ray's. Leave my kayak in trees behind a raft company's office. Return to put-in. Still not excited. Launch- no excitement but, rather, a feeling of exhilarated calmness.

Two guys in a power boat pass by.... repeatedly... turning and staring at me. They come back up stream, turn and stare some more. Turn the boat around and come back by and stop downstream. A scene from Deliverance? Just curious locals? Are they inbred? I check my Rambo river knife attached to my lifejacket, it's still there- and handy. They come up alongside me and stop, turn the motor off, and stare. Finally "Do you know about the canyon" they warn, "It's pretty rough."

"Yeah, that's what I hear, sounds great." I reply. "You're not going to go through in that thing (my rubber ducky boat) are you?" "Yeah, I plan to." "It's not very safe." "OK, thanks, I'll be Ok."

They leave shaking their heads and then circle around again. "If you get into trouble we have a cabin just upstream of the canyon, on the north bank." "OK, thanks."

The canyon begins. Hug the inside bank, Prepare for the rapids. Anticipation. Peer around the bend. Suddenly we sweep around the corner and into - more crystal clear flat water. Eventually we reach the rapids- continuous technical class 3-4, for several miles. Read and run, no place to scout from but the eddies and tops of waves... what a blast!!!

Morning- Back against a log, butt on river rounded rocks. The Tat floats (pours, flows, ripples, runs?) past. Does it know I'm watching, does it care. Why don't I get excited about trips like this anymore. Instead just a sense of infinite calm and peace. Time no longer matters, nothing matters. Just watch the dwarf fireweed bloom and wiggle in the wind. Black-headed white-bodied Bonaparte gulls flutter, glide and dive into and above the Tat. Birch, cottonwood and aspen along the banks glisten and shimmer in the wind and sun. A bumble bee checks out my shirt, nose, hands. Its black and yellow "hairs" iridescent in the morning sunshine. Endlessly the river flows. Break camp.

Bald eagles and us boaters lazily soak up the sun as the river carries us onward. Arctic terns hover- forked tail, black head, red beak and snow white body blend together in infinite grace. Suddenly, wings fold and they dive bomb into the silty water, feeding on unknown delicacies.

Set-up camp. Cook dinner. Lounge beside the river.

Snap, crackle, pop. We wait and watch as brush brakes across the river from camp. Watch and wait- snap, crackle, pop- more waiting and watching. Later- upstream- a small black bear emerges from the trees. It strolls into the river and swims to our side emerging and disappearing into the brush just upstream from camp. Wait and watch- no more sign of buddy bear. Sit and enjoy the slow boreal style sunset. Stephanie calmly says "there's that bear again." I run for my binoculars thinking, that's a different bear. Yep- a massive griz is plodding down the river bank headed straight for us. We watch it disappear into the brush at the edge of camp. Watch and wait. Wait and watch. Go to our tents. Next morning. Stephanie did not sleep. Ray describes his experience (and shows his scar) of being mauled by a griz a few years ago.

This is the way to travel. Get up. Enjoy the country. Make a pot of coffee. Discuss the meaning of life. Cook breakfast. Eat breakfast. Discuss the meaning of life. Break camp. Float down the river. Stop at the first good campsite. Hike up a glacial valley, follow massive griz and wolf tracks. Remove boots. Wade the icy glacial creek. Feet burning with cold. Nap. Read. Nap. Read.

Mountains close in on the river. Glacial creeks carry and dump their heavy loads of ground rock into the Tat- forming deltas and changing the character of the river. It has changed from a lazy small greenish stream to a gray roiling broth, the voluptuous scouring serpent so characteristic of glacial rivers. Waves and boils at deltas. Bald eagles- floated past one immature 30 feet away, its speckled white and black breast feathers ruffling in the breeze, massive talons clutching a dead king salmon. Wings spread in the indecision of retreat. Powerful beak locked. Eyes and head moving- missing nothing.

Thunder, lightning, rain, set-up flapping tents and tarp, finally shelter from the rain- which soon stops. Fog flows down the side creeks- magically, mystically, slowly.

Camp. Across and upstream from the confluence of the Tat and Asek. Over a mile across this gray semi-fluid rushing glacial water. At the edge of camp the St. Elias Mountains jut skyward. Glaciers cascade from each canyon. The glacial river valley surrounded by 5000 foot mountains. Bald eagles repeatedly fly over camp. Griz and wolf tracks under our tents. We decide to stay another day.

Sunshine, the Saint Elias, glaciers, two rivers- the Tat, the Asek. The two have now become one. Now only the Asek- huge, gray, a swirling mass of water. How many cfs? 100,000? How many molecules? How many hydrogen atoms? How many oxygen atoms? How many ground up rocks?

YO-BEAR!!!! YO-BEAR!!!! YO-BEAR!!!! awakes me in the middle of the night, I charge out of my tent. Steph heard rocks crashing on the edge of the mountain beside camp and saw something moving. But no more sign of the furry creature. However, I do catch my first sighting of a star since early June when I left the lower latitudes. That brings the dreaded realization that soon I will need to be heading back to those latitudes. But now, now all that matters is the flow of glacial water.

Emanating from the bottom of the 50 foot high glacial moraine face- a gushing fountain of gray silt saturated water. Seemingly from the bowels of the earth (actually melt water from the glacier). How old is this water? How long since it was last liquid? What was the world like then? Where will it go? How long till it becomes part of another glacier? Whose crops will it water? What fish will extract its oxygen? Can we keep it as pure as it is now? Will it become polluted? Will it continue to support life? I lay down and drink. Dunk my head. It is frigid. It is silty and gritty. It is good!!!

From the top of the moraine to the glacier it is a mile- or is it ten. Time and distance seem irrelevant (even irreverant) here. Is it Friday, Sunday or Monday? Is it 1993, 2003 or 1883? Is there a difference? River time, glacial time, timelessness- at least in human time.

Dig through the moraine to the glacial ice. Hike across the glacier itself. Glacial erratics (boulders the size of houses) perch on top of stems of translucent blue glacial ice.

Crevasses seen through binoculars. Old crevasses through which I now walk- listening to the murmures of ancient water as it trickles free. Mushy, muddy silt and sand on top of the glacier, moistened by the melting (dying?) glacier. Is the glacier dying? Is it alive? It grows. It moves. It ceases to exist. It eats rocks. It changes its surroundings. It changes the earth's climate. What is life? Is the earth alive?

Morning campfire consumes driftwood- emitting its warmth and toxic fumes. Clouds roll in. Fog slides down the mountains. Sometimes hiding the peaks, glaciers and forest. Sometimes revealing their majesty. As always the river rolls past on its journey to the sea. IT must be alive.

More glaciers feed the now immense river. Camp. Surrounded by glaciers. A two mile wide glacier behind us. As the clouds break, Gateway Knob (the entrance to Alsek Bay) becomes visible. Occasionally, 15,000 ft Mt. Fairweather is visible through the spotty clouds.

Alsek Bay (actually a lake) to ourselves. Well almost. Tons of icebergs block the entrance to the bay. No real option but to camp on a small rocky point at the base of Gateway Knob. WHAM, BAM, POW, RUMBLE. All afternoon sit, watch, listen, feel iceberg collisions, glaciers calve, icebergs breach, icebergs calve. Waves- following calvings and breaching soon wash up on shore. Icebergs - the size and shape of castles, Devil's Tower and modern art. Across the bay is Alsek glacier with an 8 mile wide face.

Morning. Ice jam is still here. Sunshine has returned. Ray rows his boat around the point to the junction of shore and ice jam. Remove the oars. Shove icebergs with oars. Pull raft along the shore, shove icebergs, pull, shove, pull, shove, pull. We have now advanced 1/2 the length of the raft. Half a day later and we are through the quarter mile ice jam. Soon we set up camp on the other side of Gateway Knob. Again we watch, listen and feel as icebergs and glaciers calve. The sound and vibration of nearby thunder, is actually a glacier calving 2-3 miles away on the other side of the bay. Water and ice crash, splash and fly. Followed by huge outwardly rushing waves, 10-20 minutes later reaching our camp- though most of their energy has dissipated.

Out the end of Alsek Bay onward towards the Gulf of Alaska- we float down the Alsek. Our last day on The River. Civilization- a few scattered summer fishing camps. Bright orange buoys marking set nets- capturing salmon. The glaciers and mountains drift behind us. Past a small summer cannery. The take-out. A pilot from Gulf Air happens to land and radios to Yakutat (their headquarters). An hour later a 206 lands- ready to take us back to Haines. Who is ready to go... who wants to go? We load gear- it won't all fit. They have another flight out tomorrow- they'll bring it then, for an extra \$100- a great price.

Fly up the Alsek, over Alsek Bay, the confluence of the Tat and Alsek, glaciers from above, turn up a glacial creek valley, up the canyon, nothing to be seen but ice and rock as far as one looks. The plane is buffeted by wind, dropping, rising, lurching, once suddenly dropping and turning on its side. Ray and Stephanie are nervous- they were in a plane crash flying out from a river trip several years ago. The pilot seems to be less concerned the rougher it gets... except that now he has both hands on the stick. Dropping down out of the pass it calms. The Chilkat River and Haines, Alaska.

The river rolls gently on. Why would it stop? How could it stop? Why should it stop? Certainly not for *Homo sapiens*. This morning I finally realize that the sense that has replaced excitement on wilderness trips is a feeling of going home. This is where I belong. Deep in the woods, high in the tundra, flat on a stark desert. Surrounded by the white noise of a river, or the soundlessness of a boreal winter. Soaking-in the warm UV-rays of sunlight in sandaled feet or huddled around a campfire built on top of the snow-pushing away the frostbite and hypothermia. Ears attuned to the howl of the wolf. Eyes searching for the track of the grizzly.

(Good luck in Washington Kirk, we'll miss you!)

I need Trip Reports! They make our newsletter so much more interesting.

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.

PROGRAMS

We are always looking for interesting programs for our meetings. If you have a program or an idea for one, please contact Darren Price at 865-742-4136.

2019 ETWC OFFICERS

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Please keep your dues up to date!

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

**ETWC
P.O. Box 5774**

Or go to our web site at: <http://etwcweb.com/membership/> and you can pay online.

Oak Ridge, TN 37831-5774

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](#)

**EAST TENNESSEE WHITEWATER CLUB
MEMBERSHIP & RENEWAL FORM**

Dues: \$15.00 Yearly Family Membership (*January 1 renewal date*)

Send to: East Tennessee Whitewater Club, P.O. Box 5774, Oak Ridge, TN 37831-5774

Name(s) _____

Address _____

_____, _____ Zip _____

Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____ Email _____

I would like to receive my newsletter by email. (circle) Yes No

Membership Status? (circle) New Renewal

What boats do you paddle? (circle) Kayak C-1 C-2 Solo Canoe Tandem Canoe

What is your paddling ability? (circle) Beginner Intermediate Advanced Expert
Class I-II Class III Class IV Class V

RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

I, _____, desiring to join my fellow paddlers in the East Tennessee Whitewater Club (ETWC), do hereby declare that I fully understand and accept the following facts of life on the river:

1. Canoeing, kayaking, or rafting, particularly on whitewater rivers, exposes the participants to various safety hazards, including but not limited to, water hazards (boulders, undercut rocks, trees, strainers, water formations such as water falls, holes, keepers, hydraulics, and other obstacles), swimming in turbulent water, using paddling equipment, accidents or illness in remote places without medical facilities, and travel in a vehicle not driven by me.
2. No one but I am responsible for my safety when I choose to paddle a particular river or a particular rapid.
3. I further understand that I have no legal duty to assist others, nor does anyone else have a legal duty to render such assistance to me. I certify that I am in good physical condition, that I can swim, and that I have no physical defects or injuries that would prevent me from participating in this activity. I fully understand and agree that, when I participate in canoeing, kayaking, or rafting, there is always the possibility of unknown, uncontrollable dangers and accidental or other physical injury and death. I know I can be killed, and I willingly assume the risks referred to in Paragraph 1 and elsewhere in this release.

Therefore, in consideration for granting me the right to join and participate in ETWC activities, and intending to be legally bound, I hereby release, waive and discharge my right to sue ETWC, its trip coordinators, instructors, leaders, officers, directors, representatives, agents, employees, and affiliates, and also any landowner or governmental unit which may allow ETWC to use its property, for any and all loss or damage on account of injury to my person or property or on account of my death, which may occur during, in preparation for, or in transit to or from an ETWC activity.

I further understand that ETWC carries no insurance for the protection of participants in whitewater activities, and any insurance coverage existing with respect to ETWC shall not alter the terms of this waiver nor impose any liability on ETWC.

This waiver applies only to acts or omissions of ordinary negligence and to any deliberate act intended to promote my safety or well being.

This waiver is signed by me in the interest of permitting ETWC to exist and to serve the paddling community, and to enable me and my fellow paddlers to feel free to donate their services to improving the sport and to help in training those less skilled in the sport without fear of liability.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS RELEASE AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS. I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND I SIGN IT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Parent or guardian if participant is under 18 years of age)