

THE VOYAGEUR



www.BlueRidgeVoyageurs.org

March 2012

THE PRESIDENT'S PUT-IN

I write the day after a classic late winter/early spring rain, and sure enough many creeks are way up and beckoning to be paddled. Of course today is a Thursday and I sit at my desk instead of in my boat. The water will persist I believe and will be enjoyed this weekend. It's a good feeling to be looking forward to the end of winter. Mike Martin continues to do a great job as trip guru. Check your email for upcoming trips.

We have a meeting coming up on Tuesday, March 13 at Pimmit Hills Library. At this point I have no club member presentations, having presented several from last season already. As a stop gap I have purchased a documentary from National Geographic called "Through the Lens," featuring "the thrill of adventure, it's a mix of adrenaline, danger, excitement, and action. But trying to capture that thrill in an eye-catching image is never easy, especially when the photographer braves infernos, dangles from cliffs or skydives from 13,000 feet above the ground. Learn the stories behind the lens where split-second timing can spell the difference between exhilarating success and devastating failure." Photography has always been a favorite with our club so I think this DVD will be enjoyed. Come one, come all.

Rick

Florida Paddling, Winter 2011-2012

by Ed Evangelidi

I had scheduled my annual Florida paddling trip to start mid December, but my formerly trusty shuttle vehicle was becoming less trusty. My backup vehicle sucks gas and I was not interested in putting thousands of miles on it at about \$100 per day of gas. Finally, my primary vehicle got towed to its burial grounds. Fortunately, my list of people to tell that I was not going south just then was very short. Other groups expecting me to join them in Florida did not need my extra boat and body for their purposes. So I'm car shopping instead of enjoying some spring fed creek. By the last day of the month I had a reliable vehicle and was furiously outfitting it. I then had to form a Plan B as I was looking at paddling by myself. This is not so hard in Florida as the gradient on most rivers there is quite slight.

After doing my family visits, I was off to explore. I had paddled most of the classic rivers and streams in Florida, but for some reason the Loxahatchee River in Palm Beach County had mostly escaped my attention. I only had one brief paddle there about 35 years ago. I paddled upstream from Jonathan Dickinson State Park (the usual take out) and it was nice, but not worthy of being the first Florida national Wild and Scenic River. A side paddle up Kitching Creek was nicer, but still not exceptional. Not ready to give up just yet, I drove to Riverbend Park (the usual put in) and paddled around there and then headed downstream. This was the reason I came to Florida as the scenery was exceptional — even throwing in a few strainers to make me feel at home.

I then paddled nearby streams heading north: North and South Forks of the St. Lucie River and the South

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FLORIDA (Continued from page 1)

Prong of the Sebastian River. All of these are quite nice. I guess because the S. Fork St. Lucie is quite wide in the lower portions, it is not mentioned in the guidebooks. I just skipped the wide part and paddled the narrow section. All four of these rivers so far are often paddled and can be paddled in rental boats available nearby. I also spent a day paddling Tenmile Creek and Fivemile Creek, tributaries of the N. Fork St. Lucie River. Quite nice but with a few strainers as it gets paddled very little.

Leapfrogging many creeks that I had previously paddled going up the east coast, I landed on Thompson and Strickland Creeks, two tidal tributaries of the Tomoka River that I had previously noted only in passing. These creeks are joined near their headwaters and offer up a beautiful circuit. Tomoka is well written up in guidebooks but I'd take these unwritten-up tributaries any day. There are also many side channels here to explore. Use little known Sanchez Park off Sanchez Blvd. as your launch point.

Continuing up the coast and leapfrogging well known creeks that I had previously paddled, I landed on Moses Creek in St. Johns County. This little known creek is entirely in a state preserve and therefore quite beautiful. The only surprise here was the severe tidal drop in the Matanzas River. I lost a bit of boat bottom to oyster shells paddling back to my car downstream on the Matanzas River.

All was not easy going on my trip as I had to abandon a few of my efforts as they were dangerous, being in remote areas with many nasty slippery portages and poisonous snakes, gators, etc. One such creek was

Rice Creek, named after an abandoned rice farm in the headwaters.

One of the many Black Creeks in Florida is in Clay County, and I paddled the nice South Fork. I hiked the outstandingly beautiful North Fork as the shuttle roads require 4 wheel drive vehicles with high clearance and my car was not up to a Cl. IV shuttle. The N. Fork is in a state forest and has some rapids. It is now high up on my list of places to return to. I then wanted to paddle a few sections of the Santa Fe River to complete my coverage there, but the area was in severe drought and I was not able to paddle above River Rise State Park. River Rise is like where the Lost River (WV) goes underground. I then returned (after about 35 years) to the beautiful Ichetucknee River. This short river comes out paddling-size from one spring and is mostly protected in a state park. Like the Lower Yough., this river is highly regulated in summer to limit the crowds but is lightly used in winter.

Continuing my journey north, I paddled the North Prong of the St. Marys [usually spelled w/o the '] River. Very nice, but it was barely up in the drought conditions there. I scouted Cedar Creek and the Middle Prong, two worthy tributaries too low to paddle when I was there. With unusually warm weather on this trip, I headed into Georgia to paddle the Okefenokee Swamp. Quite nice, but somewhat ordinary after paddling some nicer creeks up to this point.

I'll be back next year paddling totally different creeks and rivers — as long as I have a reliable car and reliable boat after putting many miles on each this paddling season.

24th Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup

Saturday, April 14, 9 am - 12 pm

Please join Potomac Conservancy as we do our part to keep our communities clean at the annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup on April 14, organized by the Alice Ferguson Foundation. Conservancy cleanup sites include:

- The River Center at Lock 8, Cabin John, MD
- Theodore Roosevelt Island, Washington, DC
- Fletcher's Boathouse, Washington, DC

To volunteer at one of our sites, please contact Hannah Larson at larson@potomac.org. [The BRV Coordinator for this event is Kathleen Sengstock.]

Boy Scouts on the Cacapon by Mark Wray

Mark Wray took a group of his Boy Scouts to the Cacapon on February 18th. We had beautiful weather with temperatures in the mid 50s. The Great Cacapon gauge was at 2.5 which is a good level for novice boaters. Our run was from Capon Bridge (Route 50) to Route 127. It was a little scrapey in spots. We put in about 10:30 after setting our shuttle and taught the sternmen how to use the stern pry. All seemed to pick this up after some practice. We had lunch just downstream of Darby's Nose which was successfully run without mishap *[see photo at right]*. After



learn best under life-threatening conditions". We got them out and changed into dry clothes and made it to the takeout without further problems. We got home around 7:00 PM. This was the second of our training trips for our trip to the New River this summer. We are going to the New to run the sections from Hinton WV down to Thurmond WV. Also, while down there we are going to raft the gorge with Wildwater Expeditions.

lunch we practiced more maneuvering. We stopped for pictures at Chapel Rock *[see photo above]* then ran the drop again without mishap *[see photo at right]*. At Caudy's Castle I noticed one of the crews seemed to have forgotten what they had been practicing all day. They were both paddling on the same side and decided they wanted to go all the way over to the left. Of course they capsized and had a short swim in some very cold water. As I have said on numerous occasions "Scouts



Trip Leading Essentials by Charlie Duffy

I know it seems a bit early in the year to think about trip leading, heck Winter has just begun. On the other hand March is only a couple of months away and careful planning is the most important aspect of trip leading. Something else to consider: although our club emphasizes paddling, we are all outdoorsmen and like hiking, biking, skiing, and many other great outdoor activities. During the winter, I often lead interesting day hikes, and this area has exceptional candidates like Sugarloaf, White Oak Canyon, Difficult Run, and many more. Perhaps there is a stream you are interested in paddling when the water level is higher; a scouting expedition at low water is a great way to prepare.

Back to planning, this time of the year is great for research. Time to check out the local guidebooks and AW (American Whitewater) to read up on streams you haven't paddled before. You will check out the overall skill level required, put-ins, take-outs, and of course known hazards. You can also pick the brains of fellow club members; this is a huge benefit of club membership. There are a number of planned events on various streams in our area like scheduled releases on Bloomington, Savage, and Gauley. There are also local festivals on the Cheat, Stony, and of course the Potomac. We also have a ton of races for every taste in the area. Leading a trip to a scheduled event generally saves a great deal of effort; nearly all of them have taken care of preset safety, shuttles, and medics and other considerations.

Besides the obvious, what are a few other considerations in trip leading? I generally start with which weekend makes the most sense. You want to ensure you have enough but not too much water. It really helps to have decent weather as well. Estimate how long the trip will take. I like to use 2 mph as a guide and a half hour for a lunch break. Check and see if you need a permit (the Lower Yough comes to mind). Perhaps there is a fee like the new one in Virginia for streams like the Maury. Next, plan on how you will get there; always carpool if possible. Figure out where you plan to meet and your rough schedule. Think about where you can eat dinner after the trip (always a nice touch). In terms of safety, are there

any close-by trails and hospital (rarely needed but certainly a good thing to plan for).

The next step is advertising; what good is a trip all by yourself? I highly recommend contacting your club's trip coordinator to get it posted on the club calendar. I also suggest adding to the message forum as well. You will need to provide the date, trip, skill level, and contact information at a minimum. Some include the put-in time as well; there are pros and cons to that. For more challenging runs (intermediate and above), you may end up with paddlers that might not be qualified. I like to know who will be on my trip, and having contact information is useful if you need to change plans at the last minute due to weather.

Now that all that housekeeping stuff is out of the way, you can expect to get phone calls and emails. Some will ask for more detail, some will ask if they are ready, etc. Screening paddlers is a necessary part of leading a trip. It is OK to have a few paddlers that are stepping up if you have enough support boaters and you feel they are ready. Unfortunately, a very few will try to bluff their way into the trip by grossly overstating their skills. Instead of asking if they paddled the Lower Yough before, ask them what was their favorite rapid and why. If they really haven't paddled the Lower Yough, it will be very obvious.

Once at the put-in, the second screening needs to be performed: gear check. Check and see who has a first aid kit, decent throw ropes, perhaps a pin kit (depends on the trip), breakdown or hand paddles. Take a close look at their helmets and PFD's; do they look like they fit? This is really crucial when leading novice trips. A loose helmet is a sure fire way to get a concussion. To be honest, I generally bring extra helmets with me on all novice (and many intermediate) trips; call me cautious. For all intermediate and above trips, I certainly expect everyone to carry a personal throw bag, rescue knife (or shears) and carabiners. I generally like to perform this check at the beginning of the shuttle when all of our gear is available. People sometimes forget gear and most of us have extras we can lend. Another item I check is cold weather protection: does it look if everyone is dressed warm

enough. If not, that is generally easy to remedy at this time. To be on the safe side, I always pack an extra NRS Mystery Hood in my dry bag to quickly address hypothermia.

All trip leaders should carry a water resistant watch. Keep an eye on your progress so you complete the trip on schedule if possible. This keeps our non-paddling friends from worrying and is crucial when others are running the shuttle for you.

If you discover a paddler in your trip that is way over their head, talk over the options with them before things get worse. Perhaps they can take off early and you can pick them up after the trip. Other options include walking the more difficult rapids (help them out if possible), pairing with a very seasoned boater and

keeping them near the front of the group, or perhaps towing their boat in more challenging rapids while they walk it.

One final point, our leaders are really trip coordinators; we manage the logistics. It often makes a great deal of sense to choose someone other than yourself to run the scout and sweep positions. This enables you to float among the whole group to see how everyone is doing. This is supposed to be fun for you too.

If trip leading seems like something you would like to try your hand at, contact a seasoned trip leader like myself and we will be more than happy to assist you. Trip leading is one of the best skill builders I know of and a great way to learn from very seasoned paddlers which our clubs have in abundance.

Donations Needed to Secure Permanent Upper Yough Takeout by Charlie Walbridge

[posted to the American Whitewater website 3 February 2012]

A generous four acre land donation from a Friendsville resident has put a permanent, convenient takeout for the Upper Yough within paddlers' reach. The donated land is in the field on the upstream side of Route 742. This new lot will greatly improve boater parking in town. The current arrangement, with paddlers parking on both sides of busy State Route 742, is a source of friction with town residents as well as a real safety concern. Your donations are needed to fully fund this project.

The Mayor and Town Council of Friendsville has protected the interests of Upper Yough paddlers many times over the past 18 months. Their efforts have prevented cancellation of up to 35% of summer dam releases and halted efforts by Deep Creek State Park to charge a per-head river running fee at the Sang Run access this summer. The Town of Friendsville will continue to protect and develop the river resource and is now asking for your support. Councilman Jess Whittemore has spearheaded an effort to create large parking lot on these four acres

Once the lot is in place, taking out will be easier. Paddlers will be able to get out under the I-68 bridge and walk past the church to the field or continue down to the Wilderness Voyageurs access. There will be parking for 125 cars, with room for expansion. Although the lot will require almost \$100,000 to finish completely, we can be parking on the grass this season for much less money. The town hopes to keep the lot open free of charge, but this will happen only if they can raise the money for this complex and expensive project from outside sources. They are aggressively pursuing grants, but paddler donations are also needed.

It's time for Upper Yough paddlers to support the town! You can double the value of your donation by acting now. American Whitewater and several past and present board members have created a \$2000 fund to match the first \$2000 of individual donations. The Coastal Canoeists have put up \$1500 to match donations from paddling clubs. Our goal is \$12,000, which will pay for the culvert and entryway off Route 742, a fence at the edge of the parking lot along Church Street, and a boater change area at the far end of the parking lot. Let's show the Town we appreciate their support!

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BRV Supports River Conservation Groups

by Kathleen Sengstock, Conservation Chair

BRV is continuing our tradition of supporting conservation groups that work to protect the rivers we enjoy. At its 2012 annual meeting last month, the club officers and Board of Directors agreed to donate \$100 each to ten deserving organizations, which are described below.

Alice Ferguson Foundation organizes the annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup, which cleans up rivers and streams throughout the Potomac watershed. Many BRV members participate in the cleanup. The Foundation also shares the wonder and excitement of the Potomac River with thousands of students, teachers and citizens every year. <http://potomaccleanup.org/index.shtml>

American Whitewater works to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. American Whitewater is the primary advocate for the protection of whitewater rivers throughout the United States and represents a diverse group of individual whitewater enthusiasts, river conservationists and local paddling clubs. www.americanwhitewater.org

Cacapon Institute uses science and education to protect rivers and watersheds from the Cacapon to the Potomac to the Chesapeake Bay. www.cacaponinstitute.org

Friends of the Cheat restores, preserves, and promotes the outstanding natural qualities of the Cheat River. www.cheat.org

Friends of the Rappahannock works to maintain the water quality and scenic beauty of the Rappahannock River and its tributaries. www.riverfriends.org

Friends of the Shenandoah River is dedicated to the protection and restoration of the aquatic environment of the Shenandoah River. www.fosr.org

Potomac Conservancy safeguards the lands and waters of the Potomac River and its tributaries by advocating sound policy and promoting thoughtful land management. www.potomac.org

Potomac Riverkeeper & Shenandoah Riverkeeper work to stop pollution and restore clean water in the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers and tributaries through enforcement and community engagement. www.potomacriverkeeper.org

River Network is a national watershed protection movement that empowers local communities. River Network includes nearly 2,000 state, regional and local grassroots organizations whose primary mission is to protect rivers and watersheds. www.rivernetnetwork.org

West Virginia Rivers Coalition seeks the conservation and restoration of West Virginia's rivers and streams for the benefit of all who depend upon them: wildlife; West Virginia residents; those who visit for recreation; and those who live downstream. www.wvrivers.org

UPPER YOUGH (Continued from page 5)

You can donate on line: Fill out the donation form at <https://americanwhitewater.org/donate>. Under "Additional Comments / In Honor Of" please enter "Upper Yough Parking"

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BRV TREASURER'S REPORT
STATEMENTS OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

	2008	2009	2010	2011	Budget 2012
Cash Balance, January 1	\$ 1,895	\$ 1,993	\$ 2,174	\$2,390	\$ 2,940
Receipts					
Memberships	1,281	1,124	1,098	1,420	1,200
Disbursements					
Newsletter	402	421	343	282	350
Xmas Party/Picnic	423	308	300	400	900
Bank Charges	8	-	-	-	-
Web Site	158	115	104	104	105
Other	192	99	135	84	150
	1,183	943	882	870	1,505
Cash Balance, December 31	\$ 1,993	\$ 2,174	\$ 2,390	\$2,940	\$ 2,635
Members	90	81	82	102	90
Conservation Fund					
Cash Balance, January 1	\$ 174	\$ 154	\$ 473	\$ 296	\$ 695
Receipts:					
Conservation	480	319	323	399	350
Disbursements:					
Conservation	(500)	-	(500)	-	(1,000)
Cash Balance, December 31	\$ 154	\$ 473	\$ 296	\$ 695	\$ 45
Flood Relief Fund	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500

UPPER YOUGH (Continued from page 6)

You can see the full [fundraising page](#) at:

http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Wiki/aw:fundraisers:friendsville_upper_yough_parking_fund
for additional photos and info.

Questions? Please contact Councilman Jess Whittemore at jwit@mac.com or Charlie Walbridge at ccwalbridge@cs.com.

About the Blue Ridge Voyageurs (BRV)

The **BRV** is a voluntary association of experienced paddlers from the Washington, DC area. Club benefits include: trips for all skill levels (most at intermediate and advanced levels); BRV website and hotline for information and pick-up trips; *The Voyageur*, published 6 times a year; club roster, published yearly in March; holiday party; conservation projects; moonlight paddles & picnics; big trips to the Smokies, Canada, Europe, and Western rivers.

Meetings: BRV will hold meetings from 7-9 pm on the following dates in 2012: January 24, March 13, May TBD, August 4 (Moonlight Picnic), September TBD, November TBD, December 8 (Holiday Party). Meetings are followed by beer and pizza at a nearby pub. Location: Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library on Leesburg Pike (Rt. 7) in Falls Church, VA. The library is on the east side of Rt. 7 about 0.6 miles south of I-495. Or, from I-66, take the Rt. 7 West exit and go about 0.6 miles west on Rt. 7. It's on the right.

BRV Website: The BRV website (<http://www.BlueRidgeVoyageurs.org>) provides information on trips, meetings, and other club events.

2012 BRV Officers: Rick Koller, President; Mark Wray, VP; Mike Martin & Daryl Hall, Trip Coordinators; Clark Childers, Treasurer; Frank Fico, Newsletter Editor; Kathleen Sengstock, Conservation.

2012 Board of Directors: Ginny DeSeau, Ed Grove, Ron Knipling, Wes Mills

The Voyageur: Newsletter of the Blue Ridge Voyageurs

The Voyageur publishes information on club events, conservation and safety news, the club trip schedule, and other news of interest to BRVers. Publishing **trip reports** is a particularly important newsletter function. Trip Coordinators are requested to write up all club trips - particularly trips to unusual or especially interesting rivers. Trip reports and other articles are accepted in any form: via electronic mail (preferred; send to fico1@netzero.net), on disk, typed, handwritten, faxed or over the phone. For trip reports, try to include the following information (if applicable): names of participants, relevant NWS gauge readings of nearby rivers, description of the water level on the river (e.g., minimum, moderate, maximum, or number of inches above or below "zero"), weather conditions, hazards, difficult rapids, info on put-ins or takeouts, distinctive scenery, and overall difficulty in relation to rivers well known to BRVers. New information about the river (e.g., new hazards) is particularly important. **Photos** are also published. Send prints to the webmaster or e-mail digital photos to the newsletter editor.

Address changes: contact Frank Fico, 1609 Autumnwood Dr., Reston, VA 20194-1523, (703) 318-7998, fico1@netzero.net. The annual roster will be kept current via updates published in each issue of *The Voyageur*.

Membership applications/renewals: submit to Frank Fico. Must renew by February 15 each year to be listed on club roster and continue receiving *The Voyageur*.



The Voyageur

c/o Frank Fico
1609 Autumnwood Drive
Reston, VA 20194-1523

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Deadline for May *Voyageur*:

Friday, May 4th

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday, March 13th

2012 Membership Roster and Trip Schedule Inside