

THE VOYAGEUR



www.BlueRidgeVoyageurs.org

March 2005

THE PRESIDENT'S PUT-IN

It was bound to happen. Sooner or later it was just going to happen. You were all probably expecting it to happen. I have finally run out of things to write in the Presidents Put In. Nothing original is coming to my mind. Now I know why one should only be president of the BRV for two years. The following is a reprint from the Presidents Put In last March:

“The winter season is upon us and there is not much to write about. The great precipitation deluge seems to have abated. We are having a more normal amount of rainfall and very little snow. There has not been much opportunity to go cross country skiing together. I know Steve Ettinger has started the Thursday group paddling and a few others may have ventured out. January was just too cold but February has been warmer. It is only a matter of time before we are all on the river again.

In this issue you will find a list of river organizations to which we have donated your money. Hopefully you will approve of your club officers' selections. If you have any other ideas in this realm please advise one of us. We can always make changes to the list next year. Our next meeting is Tuesday March [22]. I hope to see you all there.”

Ernie

Trip Report: Wekiva River, Florida by Ed Evangelidi

Here it was, the middle of ski season and my mom calls and says that I have to go to Florida for a family visit. Furiously checking the internet, I find one nice listed hike and no boating trips (wasn't looking for a great whitewater trip here). Not knowing which of the many streams down there were still blocked from four previous hurricanes, I decided to not take my boat and just hike and swim. The forecast was for below average temps anyway (good hiking weather). So I get down there (after a hike or two on the way down) and commence to explore the flora and fauna — on foot. Beautiful, but I keep noticing some fine pieces of moving water along the trail vistas. Finally, I pass a sign that says “all day canoe rental — \$5” and an asterisk, of course. A couple days later I say “why not” and decide to drive to Wekiva State Park, near where the sign is. Figure I can hike if it is too cold for these warm weather folks or too strainer choked. I turn at the sign instead of continuing to the park turnoff and find myself at a private campground with no state park nearby. Pay my \$6 park entry fee (the asterisk) and find that the rentals are still \$5 but, figuring that most non-boaters quit sooner than “all day”, they offer me a \$3, two hour rental. I wave them off and get my \$5 boat (probably still cheaper than the state park rental fee plus their entry fee) with one standard paddle and horse collar. I see these aluminum-like boats on their side creek but note that they have no keel and lo and behold, they are actually some form of tough plastic, but not ABS.

With a smile and a single blade paddle I'm off down this spring looking for alligator-infested waters. Now I'm more than 20 years away from a “J” stroke but I manage to do rather well without one and

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WEKIVA (Continued from page 1)

soon have a rhythm going with a more efficient “C” type stroke. I paddle up the Wekiva towards the state park as my goal and the scenery is incredibly beautiful. Except for one inholding at the junction of my sulphur creek and the river, there is no other sign of civilization save for the beer cans that previous paddlers have thrown overboard to lighten their boats. After five miles or so of paddling upstream I’m just at the edge of the state park and see a group of touring kayakers making landfall. This was the first “terra firma” location that I saw and was the upper primitive campground for horseback riders. One of the ‘yakers invited me to take a break with them (just in time for lunch) and I was offered helpings of their catered lunch — this being a paying week-long Sierra Club trip. Since there were eight women and one guy trip leader, I decided to join them for the return trip downstream rather than continue upstream by myself. I bid them farewell at my sulphur-smelling stream turnoff as they continued on their multi-day trip.

The Wekiva is one of Florida’s most protected rivers and well worth a day or week. The camp that I stumbled upon and the state park (that I never got to) both have reasonable camping and they are convenient near Sanford, just off I-4 on Rt. 46 west. A coupla days after the trip I was back in WV on my skis and not missing the friendly gators.

BRV 2005 Conservation Fund Recipients
Submitted by Kathleen Sengstock, Conservation Chairperson
Approved by the BRV Board of Directors

The Potomac Conservancy 8601 Georgia Ave. Suite 612 Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 608-1188 www.potomac.org	\$75	Friends of the Shenandoah River 1460 University Dr., Gregory Hall Winchester, VA 22601 (540) 636-4948 www.fosr.org	\$50
American Whitewater 1424 Fenwick Lane Silver Spring, MD 20910 (866) BOAT4AW www.americanwhitewater.org	\$75	The Cacapon Institute Route 1, Box 326 High View, WV 26808 (304) 856-1385 www.cacaponinstitute.org	\$50
Friends of the Rappahannock P.O. Box 7254 Fredericksburg, VA 22404 (540) 373-3448 www.riverfriends.org	\$50	Alice Furguson Foundation 2001 Bryan Pointe Rd. Accokeek, MD 20607 (301) 292-5665 www.hardbargainfarm.org	\$50
West Virginia Rivers Coalition 801 N. Randolph Avenue Elkins, WV 26241 (304) 637-7201 www.wvrivers.org	\$50	River Network 3814 Albemarle Street, NW Washington, DC 20016-1851 (202) 364-2550 www.rivernetwork.org	\$50
Friends of the Cheat 119 S. Price Street, Suite 206 Kingwood, WV 26537 (304) 329-3621 www.cheat.org	\$50		

West Virginia Rivers Coalition's Annual Appeal

by Ed Gertler

WVRC is holding its annual raffle now and reaching out to paddlers in neighboring areas to buy a few tickets, maybe win some great prizes*, and definitely support a worthy organization.

What is WVRC? Formed by a coalition of trout fishermen and paddlers, this nonprofit organization's mission is to protect some of the state's wild rivers and to protect water quality throughout the state. Their issues include protection of water quality standards, prevent destruction and pollution from mountaintop and other forms of coal mining, prevent industrial and agricultural pollution, and train citizens and local groups to participate in environmental decisions.

What significance is this to me? You may paddle in the Mountain State occasionally, and if you don't you owe it to yourself to experience the beauty of the Cacapon, Smokehole, Cheat, Gauley and so many other beautiful mountain streams. Also, West

Virginia is a Headwater State, meaning that when they pollute, it ultimately flows into neighboring states, such as Pennsylvania, DC and Ohio.

So if you can spare a few dollars to support us (and this is a relatively fun way to do so), and if nobody has called you yet, please visit our website at www.wvrivers.org. Send your name, address, telephone number, and number of tickets pledged (they are 6 for \$25, 2 for \$10, or 1 for \$6), and we will send you your tickets and instructions for payment. Drawing will be in May at the Cheat River Festival, but attendance is not necessary. Thanks, and see you on the river.

*There are over 30 prizes offered, including a Riot kayak, cross-country skis, stay in a bed and breakfast, Teva thongs, paddles, helmets, dry bags, raft trips, paddling lessons at Riversport.

Saving the Smoke Hole

South Branch of the Potomac, Upper Tract to Petersburg

by Bob Youker

A few years ago my wife and I attended a wonderful weekend workshop of the West Virginia Nature Conservancy at Ed Stifel's Smoke Hole Lodge. The Nature Conservancy has been working on Ed for many years and in they 2004 worked out a conservation easement on his very large landholdings along the secluded South Branch valley. They borrowed \$1,500,000 from banks for this easement and need financial help from donors to pay back the loan and to organize stewardship of the land. They have a \$250,000 challenge grant from a large donor and need contributions from the public to achieve those funds. The contact is www.nature.org/westvirginia, 304-345-4350.

Ron Knipling and I canoed this section a few years ago and camped in one of the pastures along the river where Ed raised cattle. Answering the call of nature in the middle of the night, Ron stepped in a meadow muffin in his bare feet and brought sweet smelling nature back into his tent and sleeping bag. Aside from this mishap it was a wonderful trip in an area that now will be preserved forever. In the morning Ron climbed to the top of one of the nearby cliffs.

The Smoke Hole tract is a 1,000 foot-deep canyon, three waterfalls, nearly three miles of river, more rare plants and animals than any other place in West Virginia, prairies, cedar glades, bald eagles, forested mountainsides, towering cliffs, and remote stands of junipers estimated to be over 500 years old. There is no place comparable to the Smoke Hole in all of the central Appalachians—that is why the Nature Conservancy worked so hard to protect it. Up river from Ed's land there are two Forest Service campgrounds. It is a wonderful area for all sorts of outdoor recreation.

I like micro streams where you sometimes have to walk around riverwide obstacles. The rule of thumb with me is to only get nervous when I wear a pedometer on a trip to count the land miles walked.

— Ed Evangelidi

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 2005: January 31, March 22, May 17, August 20 (Moonlight Picnic), September 20, November 15, December 3 (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 North exit and go about 0.6 miles north 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.

2005 BRV Officers: Ernie Katz, President; Beth Koller, VP; Bob Maxey, Trip Coordinator; Clark Childers, Treasurer; Frank Fico, Newsletter Editor; Kathleen Sengstock, Conservation Chairperson

2005 Board of Directors: Lou Campagna, Michael Dixon, Pete Dragon, Wes Mills, Court Ogilvie, Joe Sullivan

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 editors.

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 on the back page of 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, April 29

MARCH MEETING

Tuesday, March 22