

# THE VOYAGEUR



[www.BlueRidgeVoyageurs.org](http://www.BlueRidgeVoyageurs.org)

September 2010

## THE PRESIDENT'S PUT-IN

This summer was gone in a flash, hot as it was it didn't last long enough. There was some great storm-water paddling this year that folks got to take advantage of and even on the weekends! Hope there's some trip reports on these. Gauley season approach-eth and I hope to take advantage of it this year since I've missed it the last 2. Should be a little more hair raising (or scalp raising in my case). It's been awhile since I've negotiated its big waters but most rapids are still clearly etched in my mind's eye. I'm already nervous thinking about Koontz Flume. Hope we get a crew from the club to go.

I hear from the grapevine that the Moonlight Picnic was a success and improved upon this year [see photos, pp. 4-5]. Tiki-torches and flamingos added to the ambiance of a summer evening. Many thanks to Mark for organizing the party this year. Also, longtime member Gus Anderson was in attendance; good to hear he is back on the river.

The club meeting will be on Wed. Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> featuring Court Ogilvie's Flotsam production of his Green River trip. Should be a good one. Pizza and beer afterward as is the required BRV custom. And remember, meeting presenters always receive complimentary food and beverages. I will blast email a reminder close to the meeting date.

Rick

## **The New River, Top to Bottom: North Carolina to West Virginia, Blue Ridge to Gauley River by Ed Evangelidi**

For the many years that I've been retired I've been filling up my entire year almost 24/7 with boating, hiking and ski trips. At first I was mostly doing one day trip after another; one weekend trip after another and an occasional longer club-sponsored trip. Fun, but requiring great amounts of preparation time. Then I discovered the many multi-day trips out there. First were the many "sojourns" from Virginia and Maryland to mostly in Pennsylvania. These trips typically go down a river for up to 9 days and are a great way to see an entire river segment without having to plan all of your camping, shuttling and food preparation; with some forms of entertainment (environmental talks, musicians, etc.) thrown in. All with like minded paddlers. Then I discovered the "Paddle \_\_\_\_\_" ("Paddle Georgia," etc.). Similar types of trips but down South. It was on one of the sojourns that I happened to be mentioning to a newly acquired friend that I had always wanted to paddle the headwaters of the New River. I had a copy of William Nealy's book "Whitewater Home Companion" and I was curiously interested in the fact that he wrote about the great eastern whitewater rivers and then included one relatively tame river — the South Fork of the New River — and had great things to say about it. Seeing as I had no bias; I was interested in the North Fork also. My friend indicated that an organization was pad-

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*NEW RIVER (Continued from page 1)*

dling the South Fork and that maybe I should look into it.

Sure enough; I checked out [www.ncnr.org](http://www.ncnr.org) and found that I could paddle most of the South Fork and briefly sample the North Fork with this group. My sojourn friend and his wife were going on the trip also and saved me a great deal of time trying to find obscure launch sites and booking campsites. (This group does not provide the food and lodging that are included in the other trips mentioned.) We based out of Julian Price Park along the Blue Ridge Parkway for the first few days, then moved to New River State Park for the lower sections. We paddled for 5 days from the Boone N.C. area to the Va/N.C. state line. The first day was a very long paddle in very low water but we gained more maneuvering room after that. As this was a relatively recent annual event, the leaders discussed lengthening or (mostly) shortening the next day's trip according to changing weather, etc. Their plan was to cover 230 miles in roughly 4 weeks. (My kind of trip!) We encountered many shoals and occasional rapids as we went along and the group had varying degrees of success negotiating these features. I expected many nuisance low water bridges but only had to get out of my boat twice in the 5 days. Scenery was mostly nearby mountains and farms with many farm buildings along the way. 26.5 miles are designated as "wild and scenic". We did have occasional

other boating groups and many tubers – especially on weekends.

After paddling down to the Virginia line on the South Fork we had a chance to paddle one day on the North Fork if there was enough water. The North Fork does not hold water as well as the South Fork. As we were in a drought period it looked unpromising, but a storm overnight dumped just enough rain for us to have a full day of paddling. The lower North Fork was quite similar to the South Fork in having pretty but not spectacular scenery.

Having accomplished my goal of sampling the Forks of the New, I was now faced with either heading home or trying to squeeze in a few more days of paddling on the main stem before I had to head north for some scheduled trips I was leading. Each day I decided to stay "just one more day" until I could no longer stay and still make it back north to lead a trip in Pennsylvania. I managed to squeeze in 4 days of paddling sections that I had never seen before. The upper New River was quite similar to the Forks, but with more than double the width.

This year the entire trip was from July 24 through August 18. Next year I expect to be back to see some of the sections that I couldn't squeeze in this year. ....Unless I happen to find a trip much longer than just 4 weeks.

### **Ohiopyle Falls Pilot Boater Access For 2010**

*[from the American Whitewater website]*

After two decades of working on Ohiopyle Falls access, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Parks has implemented a pilot program to provide private boater access to Ohiopyle Falls through September 12, 2010. If this pilot program goes well, then it would be fully implemented for the 2011 boating season.

The following editorial supporting Falls access ran in the Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette* on August 25th:

#### **Taking the plunge: Kayakers on the Yough deserve more freedom**

Wednesday, August 25, 2010

Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette*

In a world where litigation and controversy stalk every potentially dangerous situation, officials of all sorts naturally tend to take the safe and timid course in deciding what to allow. That may seem sensible, but it doesn't do anything for the spirit of adventure.

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## **New River Camper: A Railroad Runs Through It! July 5-8, 2010; by Ron Knipling**

Among the great canoe camping runs in our region are the lower Smokehole, Durbin-to-Cass on the Greenbrier, and the New River above the Gorge. Two things these runs have in common are fine scenery and engaging rapids of near-maximum difficulty for gear-laden canoes.

Five paddlers, each in OC-1s or OC-2s paddled solo, embarked from Sandstone on July 5 and paddled three days and two nights to just above the New River Gorge. Doug and Brad White took out at Thurmond (30 miles total), while Will Greene, Al Cassel, and I set up an additional shuttle to run the extra 8 miles to Cunard. At the start of our trip the New was running at 2,200cfs but dropped to 1,900 by Day 3. This was an excellent level for a camping run. We were off the river late on July 7 but stayed an extra night to do a morning hike on the 8<sup>th</sup> and then make the long drive home to the swelter of DC.

We got a late start on July 5 but still paddled 9 miles to Glade Creek campground, which was quite full with July 4 week car campers. It was a nice campground, though. Just across the river were the CSX Railroad tracks. Every two hours or so a big freight train would come through, loudly rumbling. It woke us up each time, but you could actually say it added to the ambience. The next day we paddled 15 miles past McCreery, the mid-point access, to Thayer campground on river right. Along the way was a named rapid called Quinnimont, a Class 2+ wide-to-narrow wavetrain causing no consternation.

Did I mention that the Thayer campground was on river right? Did I mention that the railroad tracks were also on the right? Well, Thayer was a very nice campground featuring flat sites, picnic tables, and no people! Can you guess why? If you said "railroad tracks," you got it. The tracks were 100' away from the tent sites. In addition, they blew their horns every time as they approached the Thayer road crossing. At this location, the rumbling was a building, ominous, deafening roar. When the whistle blew, you just knew that that train was coming right through your little tent. In spite of this repeated acoustic and psychic trauma, we still had a good night. Next day was 6 miles to Thurmond, with Silo rapid on the way. It was much like Quinnimont. There were no actual silos so we weren't even sure we had run it after we did, as was also the case previously with Quinnimont.

Doug and Brad ended their trip at Thurmond, but Will, Al, and I ran a second, mid-day shuttle to set up for the 8 miles to Cunard. This has the best concentration of rapids on the 38-mile run, though still a lot of flat-water in between. Our only concern was Surprise rapids. Fifteen years ago I had capsized there with my son Jesse on a similar trip. Surprise is a surprise because you can't see it until you are almost in it. There is another wide-to-narrow Class 2 rapid above, and then just a short distance to Surprise, which is Class 4 on its right side with both rocks and sharp waves. This time, we saw it just in time and set up for semi-sneak runs on river left. No problems.

After the take-out at Cunard we made our way back to Thurmond to get Al's car and then to nearby Stone Cliff campground, also on the river. The next morning we did a 4-5 mile hike from Thurmond, one highlight of which was a signpost reading "ASS Junction." This was actually "□SS Junction" with a little help from a mischievous Magic Marker. At the trailhead Will and I parted ways with Al and decided to take the "shortcut" along McKendree Road on river right between Thurmond and McCreery to go back to I-64. Two harrowing hours later, we had rumbled 20 miles to McCreery at an average speed of roughly 10 miles per hour. I never thought I-64 would be a welcome sight, but it was on this day!

Overall, a near-perfect summer camper with many highlights and new batch of river stories to tell.



**2010 BRV Moonlight Picnic, August 21st**  
*photos by Bob Maxey*

*The traditional summertime gathering of the club featured fairly comfortable temperatures, but clouds obscured the moon for the paddle back up the canal.*

*Left column, top: Ed Grove and Michael Hoon at the buffet table. Bottom: Ashley & Gus Anderson, Debby Crouse and Kathleen Sengstock. Middle column, top: ? (guest of Al & Noemi Cassel), Kathleen Sengstock, Mark Wray, Phoebe Hamill. Middle: Jamie Fico, Abbie (the dog) and Ashley Anderson. Bottom: Ginny DeSeau. Right column, top: Frank Fico & Phoebe Hamill. Middle: Michael Hoon & Diana Rodum (Ed Evangelidi in background). Bottom: Kim Buttleman & Jenny Thomas.*





## **An Open Letter to Gauley River Boaters** *[from the American Whitewater website]*

Dear Boaters,

The rangers and staff of the Gauley River National Recreation Area welcome you to the 2010 boating season. National Park Service (NPS) employees have been working, and are continuing to work, on preparing the put-in's and take-out's, and other public use spots for upcoming Gauley River NRA visitation. We hope that this season will prove to be a safe and spectacular one for everyone.

The NPS reports no new big changes for the upcoming season but hopes to continue to build on successes and make improvements with respect to public facilities. This said, the Gauley Tailwaters campground and the public boat launches will continue to operate much like they did last year. Boaters will see new development at some of the river access points which the NPS is committed to improve, where feasible, for public enjoyment.

Camping at the Gauley Tailwaters campground continues to be free of charge and is on a first come, first served basis. There is a maximum of 8 people allowed in each campsite. There is a 2 tent, 2 vehicle maximum at each site. Quiet hours are from 10pm to 6am in the campground. Rangers provide patrols and may register each campsite. Campers who bring their pets are asked to keep their pets on a leash. The public boat launch at the Tailwaters is being improved by the park maintenance staff prior to the boating season.

Mason's Branch will continue to be managed like last year. Due to the limited amount of public land available at this access, the narrowness of the road, and the retained rights of both the upstream and downstream adjacent landowners, the park, again, plans to restrict private vehicle access on Saturdays and Sundays like last year. Parking at Mason's Branch for private boaters is offered on Fridays and Mondays in the upper parking lot. The road and parking lots are closed to private vehicles on Saturdays and Sundays. To help with parking, American Whitewater has again leased the Legg field above Mason's Branch. The field will be available throughout the Gauley season for private boater parking. The NPS is also making arrangements to provide a free boater shuttle service from Mason's Branch to the Legg field. This free service has worked well since the acquisition of the property and is a benefit to boaters who cannot park their personal vehicles at the take-out on the weekends.

Boaters who use the public boat launch at Wood's Ferry will find two permanent restroom and changing facilities. Both of these restrooms were under construction last year. This year, both have been completed and will be available for use. The park maintenance staff has also just completed improvements at the boat launches at Wood's Ferry. The launches were hardened with surface material for traction and the grade was improved to make river access easier. Parking at Wood's Ferry will be managed like it has in the past with few restrictions. Boaters are asked to park close together in an organized fashion to take advantage of all the available space and to create parking opportunities for other boaters.

NPS river patrol operations will continue as in the past. The NPS provides daily river patrols during the scheduled releases with an emphasis on EMS and rescue. The NPS river ranger patrol boat carries an AED in addition to other medical supplies and they are available to provide both routine and emergency boater services as they arise.

Additionally, the NPS has been in contact with the state Department of Transportation who has intentions of improving the dirt and gravel Panther Mountain Road prior to the beginning of the season. This road is the primary access to all of the public boat launches and routinely sees heavy traffic use.

As our Gauley season planning efforts progress, we will post information on our web page at [www.nps.gov/](http://www.nps.gov/)

gari as well as continuing to communicate with private boaters through partnering organizations such as American Whitewater and the West Virginia Rivers Coalition. For this season as in the past, we appreciate all of the boater public cooperation that helps to make the Gauley boating season the special time that it is.

Chuck Noll, Acting Chief Ranger, New River Gorge National River, Gauley River National Recreation Area

*American Whitewater would like to thank the National Park Service and all the Park Service staff for working with the private boater community to establish an outstanding private-public partnership for the management of this remarkable river. See everyone at Gauley Fest.*

*OHIOPLYE FALLS (Continued from page 2)*

The good news is that the spirit of adventure lives. It has found an official sponsor at Ohiopyle State Park, where the timid way had long prevailed.

Just once a year, the bravest and most skilled kayakers have been allowed to plunge over the 18-foot Ohiopyle Falls on the Youghiogheny River in an annual festival, which was held this past weekend. Now, thanks to a recent ruling by the state Bureau of Parks, every day will be a festival of sorts for the intrepid paddlers through Sept. 12.

Congratulations to all concerned. The concession to the daredevil paddlers is only a pilot program, but it is what American Whitewater, a nonprofit group, has long sought. If all goes well, it will make the argument that adventure and thrills are compatible with public use of the river.

Sensible restrictions will be in place. Kayakers are not allowed to run the falls solo; they must be accompanied by two others who can stand watch in the water or land in case assistance is needed. Runs are permitted from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. daily, but not if the water becomes dangerously high. No rental boats are allowed; officials don't want paddlers who just decide to run the river on the spur of the moment.

If experience shows that this is a bad idea, then the pilot program can be discontinued. The white water of the Youghiogheny deserves respect, but the falls can be navigated by people who know what they are doing. They deserve a chance to prove it -- and officials are right to give them that chance.

Read more: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/10237/1082336-192.stm#ixzz0xi4E0A00>

**2010 BRV TRIP SCHEDULE**

**(Sept. — Dec.)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Sep 11-12	TBA		
Sep 18-19	Dealer's Choice	PN/I	Mike Martin
Sep 25-26	TBA		
Oct 2-3	Lehigh release camper	LI	Alan Dickerson
Oct 9-11	NJ Pine Barrens car camper	N	Ed Evangelidi
Oct 23	Fall Colors Dealer's Choice		Star Mitchell
Nov 6-7	Tohickon Creek	I	Courtney Caldwell
Nov 11-14	Eastern Shore car camper	N/PN	Ed Evangelidi
Dec 18-Jan 16	Central Florida trips	N	Ed Evangelidi

Thanks to those who've posted trips! We've still got some holes to fill this fall — please contact Mike Martin ([imnostooge@yahoo.com](mailto:imnostooge@yahoo.com)) if you can help out.

## 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 2010: January 13, March 24, May 26, August 21 (Moonlight Picnic), September 29, November TBD, December TBD (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.

**2010 BRV Officers:** Rick Koller, President; Mark Wray, VP; Mike Martin & Daryl Hall, Trip Coordinators; Clark Childers, Treasurer; Frank Fico, Newsletter Editor; Kathleen Sengstock, Conservation.

**2010 Board of Directors:** Bill Collier, 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 November *Voyageur*:**  
Friday, November 5th

**NEXT MEETING**  
**Wednesday, September 29th**