



THE SPRAY

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COLORADO WHITEWATER ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 58, NUMBER 5, Sept/Oct 2012

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CW Fall Dinner and Elections scheduled but may change (see page 5)

Youtube Feature Videos



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Worst Swim

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Does taking our kids into the wild make us bad parents?

By Alan Kesselheim
Courtesy of High Country News
www.hcn.org

It began even before the kids were born, more than 20 years ago. Marypat finally got pregnant after years of miscarriages. We were halfway through winter in a cabin hundreds of miles from the nearest pavement, halfway through a 14-month canoe expedition, alone, vulnerable and perfectly content. The advice we got, from family, from friends, was to come home. Don't risk the pregnancy, everyone said. It's not worth it.



We questioned ourselves. Were the risks too high? The scenarios were endless and terrifying. Still teetering on the brink of pulling the plug, we decided we would paddle the 40 miles to the nearest town, from which we would leap into the final summer of travel across the wild tundra of northeastern Canada, and then make our decision.

Here's the strange thing. Fifty strokes into that trial run, still in sight of our winter cabin and five months along in a pregnancy, we were both convinced that we could do it. More than that, we were both convinced that we *should* do it.

We were right. Some would say we were more lucky than right, and sure, luck is a player, but being pregnant in the Far North, traveling at our "pregnancy pace," nurturing life through the wild exhilaration of vast, unpopulated space, was precisely the right thing for us to do.



Since then, there have been a number of similar moments, when friends and families and complete strangers weighed in to question our willingness to take our children into risky places. After we loaded up the canoe and took off down the Yellowstone River, across Montana, for example, when Eli was 9 months old and Sawyer was a fetal bud ticking away inside Marypat, "You're crazy," people said. We went. We took the precautions we deemed necessary. We had a

Continued on page 7



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CW MISSION

The Colorado Whitewater Association promotes the sport of whitewater paddling in the Rocky Mountain region. The club introduces new paddlers to whitewater, provides training in technique and safety, supports racing, informs the public about whitewater issues, including river access and conservation, and works to resolve related problems. CWWA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization run entirely by volunteers.

CW was founded in 1954, and is the oldest club in the United States of America devoted wholly to whitewater paddle sports.

CW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Scott Winkleman	sewinkleman@msn.com
Past President	Leslie Tyson	lesanntyson@msn.com
Vice President	Ted Diedrich	teddd@coloradowhitewater.org
Treasurer	Laurie Maciag	lmaciag@yahoo.com
Access/Conservation	Ted Diedrich	teddd@coloradowhitewater.org
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Events	Karen Moldenhauer	karenm@coloradowhitewater.org
Instruction	Mark Robbins	mrobbins@frii.com
Legal	Patrick Tooley	patrickt@coloradowhitewater.org
Membership	Helen Johnson	hellionbiz@gmail.com
Merchandise	Karen Moldenhauer	karenm@coloradowhitewater.org
Playboating	Bart Pinkham	coloradoburn@hotmail.com
Publicity/Advertising	Jodi Lee	jodilee23@gmail.com
Roster	Scott Lowry	slowry@indra.com
Safety	Matt Rensel	matt@rensel.us
Secretary	Adria Roberts	miss_a_rob@yahoo.com
Spray	Erik Rist	erik@ristlaw.com
Training Camp	Patty LaBarge	plabarge@hotmail.com
Webmaster	Scott Winkleman	sewinkleman@msn.com

MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONS?

To Join CW, visit our website at www.coloradowhitewater.org and join online. To change your e-mail or other contact information: Contact Helen Johnson at hellionbiz@gmail.com.

2012 Spray Submission Schedule

The Spray encourages article submissions on all whitewater related issues. Please send submissions to Erik Rist at erik@ristlaw.com.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Submission Date</u>
Nov/Dec	November 1, 2012
Jan/Feb	January 1, 2013
Mar/Apr	March 1, 2013
May/June	May 1, 2013
July/Aug	July 1, 2013

The Spray is the official newsletter of the Colorado Whitewater. It is published semi-monthly. Publication address:

455 Sherman Street, Suite 300
Denver, CO 80203
ISSN: N/A
Subscription is free to CW members.

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THE SPRAY
455 Sherman Street, Suite 300
Denver, CO 80203

erik@ristlaw.com

Editor
Erik Rist

Contributors:

Alan Kesselheim
Karen Groves
Peter Williams
Patty Pinkham
Erik Rist

Online Production
Scott Winkleman

Advertising Sales
Jodi Lee
jodilee23@gmail.com
Please contact for rates and specs

Submissions

We welcome your contributions on topics related to whitewater paddling.

Written Material

We prefer e-mail submissions, preferably in Microsoft Word, RTF, or plain text. Maximum length: 1,000 words.

Don't be shy, even if you don't think you're a great writer. We'll edit for length, style, grammar, and spelling as needed to make your writing more clear and readable.

Photos and graphics files: We much prefer bitmap, jpeg, pdf, or tiff format, but can work with others. Please use a minimum resolution of 300 dpi.

A New Rock at Warm Springs Rapid (Dinosaur National Monument)

By: Peter Williams

On August 3, 2012, Chris Dach and I arrived at Warm Springs Rapid on the Yampa River, on the third day of a low-water (roughly 150 cfs) inflatable kayak trip originating at Deerlodge Park. We stopped to inspect the rapid and discovered that some substantial changes in the rapid's geography had recently occurred.

Our first impression was that Warm Springs Draw had experienced a recent flash flood event, adding some new debris to the upper reach of the rapid.

We'd seen evidence of recent flash floods in a number of drainages upstream, so it was no surprise to find such evidence here. But we quickly recognized that the relatively small flood event from Warm Springs Draw couldn't account for all of the devastation—and the size of the new boulders—on both sides of the river.



Not only were many of the fresh boulders too large relative to the size of the new flash flood channel, they were all recently fractured into flat planes and sharp edges, indicating that they had not travelled any distance in a debris flow. We soon noticed that the several shattered box elders in the vicinity of the devastation were all arranged with their broken trunks and branches angled uphill away from the rapid, in the opposite direction of the flash flood waters.

Many of the trunks of these trees were coated with up to a half inch of dried mud—often extending up to ten or twelve feet above the ground—with most of the mud caked on the sides facing the river. Many of the boulders in the rapid, both the older landmark features we were familiar with and the new additions, were coated with this mud layer, but typically only on vertical surfaces facing the center of what was clearly an impact zone. Mud was also splattered on rocks and trees up to a hundred feet or more from the impact zone.

What we surmise is that a small debris flow occurred near the top of the rapid, followed by a major rock fall from the Warm Springs Cliff. The rock fall may or may not have occurred during the same weather event that created the flash flood, but there was no evidence of debris flow material deposited on top of the rock fall debris.

An area of exfoliated rock surface is visible high on the Warm Springs Cliff directly above the impact zone, but we could discern no evidence of damage to the cliff wall below this scar, which made it difficult to be sure that this was the actual source of the rock fall. Neither of

us felt confident that this feature was new, but we had no memory of it seeing it in the past. It is similar in appearance to the “coke bottle” scar that is so prominent high on the cliff wall when approaching the rapid from upstream, but is several hundred feet farther downstream of that landmark.



Several details about this event continue to mystify us. The caked mud clearly extends up the trees along the edge of the rapid far too high to have been the result of pooling water from a temporarily dammed river. Clearly there must have been some minor damming of the river during these events, but we saw no evidence of new sediment and rock washed into the lower half of the rapid, a condition we would expect after a larger dam was subsequently breached. In

addition, the mud deposits farthest from the impact zone often appear to have rained down on the top surfaces of the preexisting debris fan material, rather than having been deposited by flood waters. Yet the existence of large boulders with thick mud deposits only on a single vertical face, especially evident on the large boulder shown on page 1, suggests there was more to this dynamic than simply a rain of splashed mud after the impact. Perhaps the mud on the boulder in the photograph was originally accumulated in the fracture that eventually failed, creating the rock fall in

the first place, and the clean faces of this boulder are the result of fracturing after impact. However, this would still leave unexplained the distinct, one-sided vertical coatings on several of the large boulders out in the



rapid, most of which predate the rock fall.

Another distinct feature is an apparent impact crater on the edge of the water, immediately upstream of the major rubble pile. We can understand no dynamic that would have created this deep, circular pit except perhaps that an extremely large block of rock landed here before bouncing out and shattering into the new rubble now piled next to the crater.

The majority of the large, square-cut rock rubble is now piled on the river-right side of the rapid, just downstream of the point where boaters typically make their move to cut through the lateral waves at the top of the rapid. Even if next spring's high water begins to settle and rearrange these boulders, it is likely that they will provide a new hazard to boaters making this crucial maneuver—in the form of a new hole or, at the very least, by the addition of several very sharp rocks with the potential to cut boat tubes. The new accumulation of large rock presently creates a steep drop of approximately six to ten feet over a fifty- or sixty-foot section of the rapid. In past years at low water I have observed a similar short, steep drop in the river at this spot, but the gradient seems now to have been increased, with more pooling upstream.

On the opposite side of the river there is now a large accumulation of smaller rock and fine debris, which is less likely to impact the rapid and will probably erode quickly in higher flows. This debris appears to me to have also



been part of the rock fall, rather than a result of the flash flood down Warm Springs Draw. I believe the smaller material landed closer to the base of the cliff, while the larger blocks bounced away from the cliff during their descent. Small amounts of the same fine material occur on ledges several tens of feet above the main accumulation at river level, and small box elder on one of these ledges has been completely stripped of its leaves and branches.

It will be interesting to see what the rapid looks like when next spring's boating season begins, but boaters should be prepared to see some changes.



CW Fall Dinner is scheduled but may change:

CW's annual meeting and Fall Dinner is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 29 when we'll hold elections for positions on our Board of Directors. If you'd like to serve on our board, please email Scott Winkleman at sewinkleman@msn.com to be nominated for one of our board positions. However, there's a high likelihood that this date will be postponed. Notice of this change will be emailed to all members and posted on our website and Facebook page.

Will the crowds at the Golden Play Park become an issue next season?

Clear Creek Crowds A Concern 7/17/12

Golden officials cite alcohol, dogs, refuse and erosion among popular area's ills

By Karen Groves

Reprinted courtesy of the Denver Post



Photo by Lindsey Pierce

Folks headed to the Clear Creek White Water Park in Golden to cool off might want to leave their cigarettes, dogs and alcoholic beverages at home.

After huge crowds descended on the creek during the Fourth of July week, Police Chief Bill Kilpatrick said the city is warning people of its zero-tolerance policy on alcohol and dogs off leash. During that busy week, he said police wrote at least 61 summonses and 40 were alcohol-related.

Kilpatrick said he'd never seen the creek so crowded.

Golden City Manager Mike Bestor said, "The popularity of Clear Creek has grown like a flash mob."

As a result, tougher enforcement of existing laws will be followed.

Recently initiated are bans on smoking and possession of glass containers.

Residents, City Council and the Parks and Recreation Department will continue to look at ways to control crowds and protect the environment along the banks of the creek without putting a dent in what local merchants view as an influx of profit.

Golden Chamber of Commerce president Gary Wink said, "Downtown merchants are saying, 'Hey, it's been a good summer.'"

He was philosophical about the crowds, saying, "I look at it as the challenge of success."

Problems with parking and questionable behavior, an increase in trash and impacts on trails have disturbed some residents, who also seek answers.

Mayor Marjorie Sloan invited residents to express their concerns and have patience.

According to Kilpatrick, additional patrols will be stepped up, but the police force is already short staffed. Posted notices have been erected along 10th Street.

Rebecca Winning, spokesperson for Jefferson County Public Library, said because the Golden Library at 1019 10th St. was getting complaints from patrons who were unable to find parking or even access the library, a security guard was hired Saturdays and Sundays to direct traffic and protect patron parking.

Bestor said the city hopes to get a handle on the crowds. One serious issue to be tackled is the environmental impact to the creek. People are trampling the banks and moving rocks around. Bestor said some folks show up in the morning and roost on the banks. "With the sheer numbers, there are stream bank erosion issues," Bestor said.

He cited an instance when of a family that brought a propane barbecue grill, spilling grease on the rocks.



Craig F. Walker

"It's not intentional damage.

It's too many people for the area," Bestor said.

He said as ideas come forward and citizens, the council and the park board discuss solutions, some efforts to correct the situation may be experimental.

"We don't want to stop people from having fun, it's a tremendous asset people enjoy. But somehow we have to get some regulation," Bestor said.

Christina Vandoloski, front desk manager at Golden History Museum, said as the weather got cooler, the crowds lessened, but she said, "The heat makes people rude."

Kids In The Wild continued from page 1...

lovely, empowering time, and I'm convinced that Eli formed some essential character qualities from those weeks under the wide skies.



Or when we took Sawyer, at 3 months of age, and Eli at 2 years, down the Green and Colorado rivers. When we took on the Big Bend section of the Rio Grande with Marypat seven-months' huge with Ruby and the boys at an uncontrollable 2 and 3 years of age, in one overburdened, 17-foot canoe. "What are you thinking?" people asked.

What we think is that this is what we do. This is the legacy we want to share with our children. Are there risks? Of course. Might something go badly wrong? Sure. Would we feel terrible if it did? Yes. Should we stay home and play it safe? Hell, no.

Because here's the other thing. Playing it safe is a matter of perspective.

The safe environment that people tout brims with all kinds of dangers -- more dangers, I submit, than we ever encounter in the wild. Routinely, we pile our children into cars and drive around at lethal speeds. We litter our homes with toxic substances, spray our yards with pesticides, keep firearms, eat food full of chemicals, breathe polluted air, let our kids drive, and put them in social contexts where bad things happen all the time.



We think little of these dangers because they are routine. Everyone does it. Nobody questions it. We take precautions, just as we do on a wilderness expedition when we wear life vests and carry a first aid kit and practice our skills and calculate the itinerary.

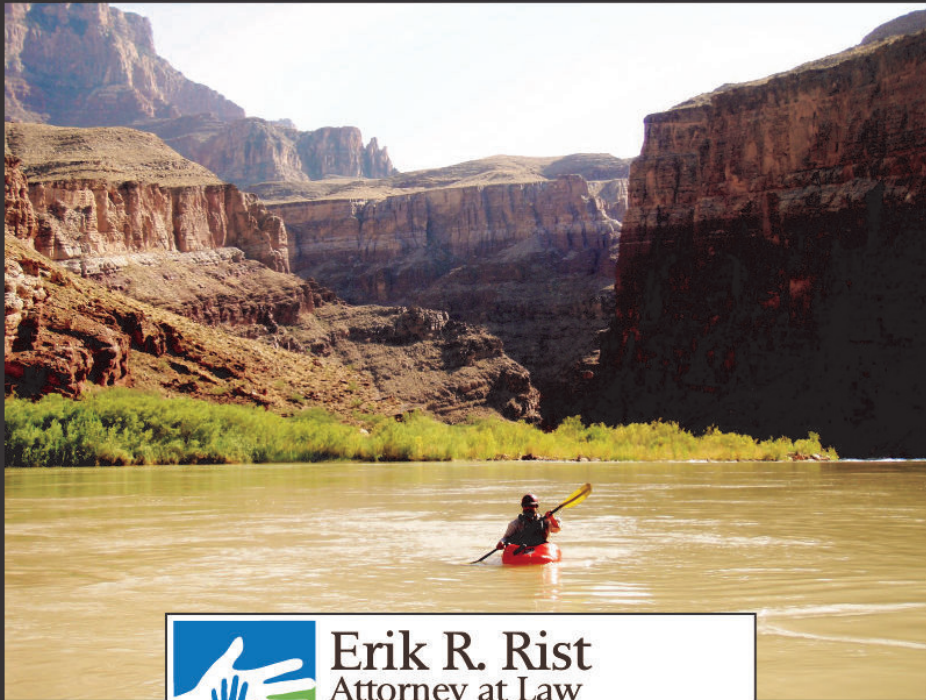
Of course, there are moments. The polar bear along the shores of Hudson Bay comes to mind. The meadow full of bear and wolf tracks high in the Washakie Wilderness of Wyoming. The evening Sawyer fell from a tree along the Marias River in Montana, slashing open his neck on a stick; Ruby's capsized against a rock in one of the canyons of the Rio Grande.

There have been a handful of incidents where I catch myself thinking, "That could have gone badly." It's the same way frightening scenes play on the mental screen when the car starts skidding on the ice, or a toddler falls down the stairs, or I find out that I've been living next to a Superfund site for years and drinking the well water, or look at a food



label full of incomprehensible ingredients, or send a teenager off on prom night.

At those commonplace, civilized junctions with risk, I find myself sometimes wishing I were still deep in the embrace of a wild place, feeling the pulse of Mother Earth, with my children close by and the exhilaration of adventure coursing through our bodies.



Erik R. Rist
Attorney at Law

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720-542-8961
Erik@RistLaw.com
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CW Member

Movie Review By Patty Pinkham

Congo: The Grand Inga Project
Produced by Red Bull and Steve Fisher
Run Time: Approx 80 minutes
Stars: Steve Fisher, Rush Sturges, Ben Marr and Tyler Brandt
Soundtrack: Outstanding
Rating: 6 Stars Out of 4!!!!

Bart and I were lucky enough to go to the premiere of this documentary in Salt Lake City in Aug. And although all of the expedition kayakers themselves were in the theater sitting directly behind us and had signed posters and gave hugs to us in person, there were many times in this movie where I thought, "They are not gonna make it." This is the story about 4 world-class athletes navigating the 50 mile section of the Inca Rapids on the Congo River...twice as steep and 30 times larger than the Grand Canyon. Those who have tried previously have all died. These rapids are the biggest and highest volume rapids in the world. Follow their story as they struggle through political unrest, the jungle, equipment failures, training, geography, whirlpools and ultimately - *themselves* in this epic journey. Especially touching was the tribute made to Hendri Coetzee who died on the Congo after an crocodile attack in December of 2010. Local

note: Watch for the scene in which a RapidAir tank which holds an emergency air supply, locally manufactured in Lakewood Colorado by Jeff Bennett (www.RapidProducts.com), saves Steve's life. The actual tank was borrowed from none other than Bart Pinkham - owner of Golden River Sports.

