

*American Whitewater*  
*Annual Report*  
2002



Dear Friends of American Whitewater,

This year offered tremendous programmatic victories that were achieved due to the support of our members, volunteers, foundations, and corporate sponsors – those who believe in us. Here are just a few of the accomplishments which illustrate the power and permanency of our efforts...

- We saw water restored in tremendous rivers (North Fork Feather, Mokelumne) and settlements that will result in future water running in others (Bear River in Idaho, Hoosic in New York) for 30-50 years.
- Our members helped us eliminate the threat of a hydro project that would dry up a classic creek (Clearwater) in Washington, and complete a successful effort to decommission a dam on the Sandy River in Oregon.
- We emerged victorious from a lawsuit filed against the National Park Service, resulting in their resuming the planning process for perhaps the most iconic river and experience in our nation – the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River.

We addressed and advised members of the paddling community about 300+ access issues and at year end, published the Access Toolbox, now used frequently as a valuable 'go to' guide for anglers, boaters and ... the public at large.

American Whitewater wrestled with a troubling stall in membership growth and challenging economic environment, affecting our ability to secure funding for our conservation and protection work from both foundations the outdoor industry.

As a result, we reacted to our reality with a tightening of our belt and a shift in our outreach toward those who are specifically 'in the family' - those who are river enthusiasts and view themselves as such. We started a renewed outreach to Affiliate Clubs and members from each region of the country. We are honing this focus, as is necessary when the going is tough. This will result in our developing more targeted programs, and AW will be stronger for it in the long term.

We thank all of you who have played a role in supporting, sustaining, and volunteering for American Whitewater this year. It has been a time during which we've confirmed many incredible, inspirational relationships.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Kevin Lewis'.

Kevin Lewis  
President, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Risa Shimoda'.

Risa Shimoda  
Executive Director



## Access

American Whitewater's mission "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely" provides direction to our Access Program. Thus we strive to secure access that also ensures long term resource protection. We achieve this conservation objective through education, advising agencies, and sharing information. *American Whitewater fights to protect public access to America's rivers. ACCESS means being able to 1) get TO and FROM the river, and 2) the right to float ON the river*

**Grand Canyon (AZ):** Boaters are waiting up to 25 years for a permit to experience this wilderness treasure. In 2002 American Whitewater and three other conservation and boating groups won a lawsuit against the National Park Service, committing them to the creation of a Colorado River Management Plan that will address conservation and recreation issues by 2004. AW has been taking an active role in the planning to ensure that the boating community's interests are represented.

**Cheesman Gorge (CO):** Landowners throughout Colorado are threatening your right to float on public waterways that cross their property. American Whitewater reached an agreement reopening the Cheesman Gorge section of the South Platte, but there is still plenty of work to do to secure boaters' rights in the Rocky Mountain State.

**Chattooga Headwaters (SC/GA):** After a seven-year effort by American Whitewater, the US Forest Service began to give serious consideration to opening up some historically off-limits sections of the Chattooga to more than just anglers. The opening of the Sumter Forest Plan to public comment created an opportunity for the boating community to secure complete access to one of the great rivers of the Southeast.

**Black River (NY):** When a proposal arose to modify the popular Route 3 Wave and Hole Brothers play spots to make them more suitable for competition, American Whitewater spoke up to ensure that the voice of the local paddling community would determine the course of the project, and that access to the sites would remain free and unlimited.

**Pigeon River (NC/TN):** American Whitewater persuaded Cocke County to reject a proposal that would require private boaters to pay a fee to use the river; the county provides no public access to the river and the money would go into a general fund instead of benefiting the river and its users.

**Mongaup River (NY):** Many power companies operating hydroelectric dams have cut off public access to nearby sections of rivers in response to a Homeland Security memo issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. American Whitewater has been working closely with these companies to reopen these rivers to small boats. Thanks to the efforts of AW and the Kayak & Canoe Club of New York, the Mongaup is one such success.

**Amicalola and Etowah Rivers (GA):** American Whitewater intervened on behalf of boaters when a new landowner closed the takeout for the Amicalola on the Etowah River. Access was restored within weeks.

**Little River (NC):** Running the series of waterfalls labeled “Mystery Creek” in Wayne Gentry’s *Southern Fried Creekin’* was against regulations in Dupont State Forest, until American Whitewater’s access staff persuaded local foresters to change the rules. Boaters will have access to the spectacular scenery and clean drops beginning in 2003.



## Conservation

**Hydropower Legislation (National):** Due to California’s energy crisis politicians have proposed legislative reforms to avoid future crises and solve the ‘relicensing problem.’ The search for a solution to the crisis ultimately fell upon reforming the environmental regulations contained in the Federal Power Act. The Nelson-Craig amendment would give utilities the following: 1) a louder voice than any other interest in deciding how our rivers are managed; 2) an ability to undermine the environmental standards that hydropower dams must meet, and 3) loopholes to challenge basic environmental protections on the grounds that they harm profit margins. The bill was tabled after long discussion. American Whitewater supports the idea that the Federal Power Act should not be altered in a fashion that skews the process for licensing and hydropower project in favor of the utilities.

**North Fork Feather River (CA):** AW has worked with environmental organizations, state and federal organizations, state and federal agencies and Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) for over five years in a complicated and exhaustive dam relicensing process. Finally, on June 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1600 cfs of clear blue water roared into the gorge-turning the river into a playground for more than 200 boaters. The weekend marks the revival of a river that will certainly be a major resource for California boaters. The new settlement will ensure whitewater releases on the first weekend of each month and improve the overall health of the river. It strives to protect fish habitats by maintaining appropriate water temperatures, providing spawning habitat for fish. Other ecosystem restoration measures include planting trees and other vegetation along river and establishing an Ecological Resources Committee, which makes resource and management decisions over the life of the license. American Whitewater is still a long way from restoring the remaining thirty-six miles of the North Fork Feather. Early in

the settlement negotiations PG&E chose to relicense the projects individually. The style typically equates to resource conflict because stakeholders are forced to fight for limited resources. PG&E opposes whitewater releases on the Poe, Belden and Seneca reaches claiming that whitewater flows will cause serious impacts on the aquatic environment particularly amphibians. PG&E's decision to relicense the projects individually requires AW to hammer away at the negotiation table into the future.

**Ocoee (NC):** In 2002, the Upper Ocoee continues to be an issue that American Whitewater considers a top priority. AW is attempting to work with the TVA, as the formal representative for downstream recreationists in TVA's Reservoir Operations Study (ROS). AW is also worked to educate our members, regional business owners and citizens, and politicians about the importance of recreation on the Ocoee and the great potential benefits that may result through the ROS. We advocated for free recreational releases at monthly meetings that will wrap up with the completion of the ROS late in 2003.

- **March 2002:** With the ROS in full swing AW filed detailed comments and used the web site and journal to encourage public comment from the paddling community.

- **Summer 2002:** American Whitewater was invited to join a TVA 'Public Review Group' that assisted with the ROS. AW attended monthly meetings of the Public Review Group. Despite our participation TVA unilaterally decided to remove the Upper Ocoee issue from the ROS - September 2002.

- **October 2002:** Hosted the Teva National Freestyle Championships on the Upper Ocoee and used the event to generate over 1,000 hand-signed letters to the TVA Board requesting releases on the Upper Ocoee and criticizing the TVA decision to remove the Ocoee from the ROS. The event and our message received major television and newspaper coverage.

**Cheoah (NC):** The dried up bed of the Cheoah River returned to life in Spring 2002, when a turbine broke in one Tapoco's dams. Boaters discovered nine miles of continuous class IV rapids that once flowed through the Nantahala National Forest. American Whitewater struggled through negotiations with Tapoco to ensure that new dam licenses would require regular releases, but met only opposition. Now AW is going straight to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to try to restore the natural beauty of the Cheoah to the Southeast.

**Roadless Initiative (National):** The Roadless Area Conservation Rule (RACR), championed by President Clinton, remained a phenomenal tool to protect rivers across the country. Lands protected from road-building are not only safe from the direct ecological and aesthetic impacts of the roads, but also from the many impacts of logging and mining, and lands affected by this rule are in the headwaters of the rivers we all enjoy. When the RACR was signed on January 12, 2001, over 58 million acres of Forest Service land were protected from the building of roads. Since that signing the RACR was subjected to eight lawsuits involving seven states and in response the Forest Service reopened the issue for additional public comment. Apparently the more than 1.6 million comments, overwhelmingly in favor of protecting the roadless lands, were not sufficient. We must continue to assert that roadless lands are important and should be protected. American Whitewater was and is a proponent of permanent protection of these roadless lands as they are critical for

maintaining or restoring adequate water quality, wildlife and recreation.

## Ongoing Access & Conservation Projects

Sandy (OR)	Klamath (OR / CA)
Coosa (AL)	Nantahala (NC)
Tuckasegee (NC)	Blackwater Canyon (WV)
Pigeon (NC)	Chelan (WA)
Hoosic (NY)	Kern (CA)
Colorado's Grand Canyon (AZ)	Skykomish (WA)
Stonycreek (PA)	Contoocook (NH)
Black River - Route 3 Wave (NY)	Klamath River (OR)
	White Salmon (WA)

## Events

Once again, American Whitewater events provided an opportunity for us to reach out to paddlers in their communities, offering venues to celebrate and promote river conservation and access issues.

American Whitewater's leadership and membership support river events as a fundamental component of the organization. Our events strategy focuses on achieving four goals:

1. Increasing membership for the organization,
2. Focusing the media and the public on significant conservation and access issues,
3. Motivating passive members to become active stewards, and
4. Serving likeminded groups who support American Whitewater in order to reach mutually beneficial goals.

**American Whitewater Teva Tour 2002:** In 2002, American Whitewater and Teva teamed up to deliver a series of the fourteen best whitewater events all culminating with the first ever National Championships. The series included four regional geographic circuits located in the Northeast, Southeast, Rockies, and Pacific Coast. Each regional circuit includes three events. Athletes received points at each event to earn a spot to compete at the Teva Whitewater National Championship.

Importantly, this event presented a unique opportunity to create a platform for publicizing the imminent discontinuation of Upper Ocoee releases, forever. The resultant publicity and public response to our educating participants, volunteers, attendees and the media bolstered the effort by members of the regional economic community to create a serious evaluation of the river's future with TVA and the office of our US Congressman Wamp.

**Gauley River Festival:** This year's AW Gauley Festival was a tremendous success. With the help of over 250 volunteers and the dedicated efforts of the AW Board of Directors and Staff over 5,200 people enjoyed a fantastic gathering of the whitewater community. The festivities included some activities that will certainly be repeated and others that will not.

However, it does appear that festival goers have a special place in their hearts for pork and pork derived products. Rounding out this year's festival was a fantastic entertainment package that included the world famous IR Big Gun Show and the music of STRUT. Strut's ability to deliver a spectrum of live music carried attendees into the wee hours of the morning.

**Deerfield Riverfest:** The festival was a HUGE Success! Due to the efforts of many volunteers, generous sponsors, and the patronage of the Northeastern paddling community the Deerfield Riverfest was able to raise several thousand dollars to support AW's conservation and access work. One boater said "I wait for this fest all year and it is even better than Christmas because it lasts a whole weekend." Great music by the Hemlock Gorge Boys, world famous barbeque, and great new activities made the Deerfield Riverfest better than ever. Helping to round out the success of the festival was the introduction of three new activities. A smashing success in its first year, the AW Used Boat Sale sold 15 boats and raised \$300 for AW. Also taking on a much larger role this year was the Official "Nails Tourney". Finally, the Wilderness Experiences 'Boater Cross' introduced the Deerfield River to the excitement of racing and battling your paddling comrades while blasting through rapids.

## Safety

Safety is part of American Whitewater's mission. AW understands that through safety education we can greatly reduce the incidence of fatality on the river. Through articles in the journal and our whitewater data base we strive to inform boaters of safe practices on the water. Subjects covered in the journal may include discussions on equipment design, Safety Technique, and Accident Reports. The whitewater data base, typically updated twice per year, is an archive of most accidents involving experienced private Canoeists and Kayakers, as well as any other whitewater accidents reported to us. These two resources not only provide preventative material to keep boaters safe on the water but also offer a sad reminder of the friends we have lost.

## Journal

American Whitewater, the journal of American Whitewater, once again provided a reflection of whitewater recreation and the initiatives of the organization, as it had each year since the inception of the organization. Articles in the journal highlighted the year's conservation and access issues, ever-popular river destinations, trends in river paddling and safety techniques – and are submitted by members of the paddling community and members of American Whitewater's board and staff.

In 2002, the Journal said farewell to its editor for nine years, Bob Gedekoh. Bob, a veteran river runner when he not caring for patients as an obstetrician, reigned as both the sentry and captain of our hallmark publication with conscientious pride and enthusiasm. Bob's unlimited energy, dry wit, unmitigated penchant for dry commentary on the paddlers he met each day and the stories they represented, was endearing and will be missed.

AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION, INC.  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
December 31, 2002

ASSETS		
	2002	2001
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 470,254	\$ 219,258
Cash – restricted	3,300	
Accounts receivable	51,885	20,612
Grants receivable	30,000	35,000
Inventory	<u>7,331</u>	<u>3,222</u>
Total current assets	262,770	278,192
Grants receivable	-	30,000
Property and equipment, net	7,633	17,796
Land	66,949	
66,949		
Total assets	<u>\$ 337,352</u>	<u>\$ 392,937</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable	\$ 40,260	\$ 96,131
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	<u>297,092</u>	<u>296,806</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 337,352</u>	<u>\$ 392,937</u>

AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION, INC.  
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
For the year ending December 31, 2002

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Total</u>	<u>2001 Total</u>
Revenue:				
Grant Income	\$ 140,850	\$	\$ 140,850	\$ 127,125
Other Income	<u>918,137</u>	<u>3,300</u>	<u>921,437</u>	<u>711,300</u>
Total revenues	<u>1,058,987</u>	<u>3,300</u>	<u>1,062,287</u>	<u>838,425</u>
Expenses:				
Program services:				
Conservation	172,541	-	172,541	152,899
Access	147,614	-	147,614	144,982
Public education	<u>541,415</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>541,415</u>	<u>553,880</u>
Total program services	<u>861,570</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>861,570</u>	<u>851,761</u>
Support services:				
Management and general	114,167	-	114,167	64,709
Fundraising	<u>86,264</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>86,264</u>	<u>68,613</u>
Total support services	<u>200,431</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>200,431</u>	<u>133,322</u>
Total expenses	<u>1,062,001</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,062,001</u>	<u>985,083</u>
Net (decrease) increase in assets	(3,014)	3,300	286	(146,658)
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>296,806</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>296,806</u>	<u>443,464</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 293,792</u>	<u>3,300</u>	<u>\$ 297,092</u>	<u>\$ 296,806</u>

## American Whitewater Staff

Risa Shimoda	Executive Director
Jason Robertson	Access Director
John Gangemi	Conservation Director
Kevin Colburn	Conservation and Access Associate
Phyllis Horowitz	Administrative Director*
Michael Phelan	Events Director
Bob Taylor	Events Coordinator*
Carroll Thrift	Development Director*
AJ McIntyre	Corporate Relations Director*
Nick Lipkowski	Executive Assistant
Carla Miner	Conservation Assistant
Jessica Rice	Membership Coordinator*

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\* partial year

