

The Oregon Whitewater Association brings private boaters together for the enjoyment of whitewater boating. Our vision is to promote whitewater safety and training for all of our membership in an effort to provide safety awareness and confidence when executing river rescue skills. OWA is the community of choice where fun and river adventures thrive and where people and rivers connect.



In This Issue

<i>Minam River Trip</i>	1
<i>Addendum</i>	2
<i>OWA Contact Info</i>	2
<i>President's Corner</i>	3
<i>OWA Picnic</i>	9
<i>Recipe of the Month</i>	12
<i>River Safety</i>	13
<i>Knot of the Month</i>	14
<i>River Tip</i>	15
<i>Grande Ronde</i>	16
<i>OWA Trip Calendar</i>	18

LOGGING ON THE MINAM

Submitted by Tom Riggs

DRY LAND

The thrill of adventure, the success in the rivers lottery, the planning, the whitewater in the wilderness: these are the things that drive the wanderlust spirit (and maybe some bottled spirits). All of this was in store for our boating group for the Selway river launch May 18th. We all do our Voodoo when speculating which launch dates to pick for the lottery rivers, and back in January the snowpack was dismal in Idaho which meant choosing an early season date for the Selway might provide a winner. This strategy worked and in March I was notified of a May 18th launch. Wasn't there a volcano that erupted on that date? An ominous second choice date.

As launch date approached we had a full permit of 16 capable boaters lined up and menus, group gear and shuttle were all being organized. One very important item out of our control was Mother Nature. She decided to dump 2-1/2 winter's worth of snow in the Bitterroot Mountains, putting the snowpack at 255% of normal in early May. There was hope because the Ranger at the West Fork Ranger Station said they expected to have the road plowed by May 15. If the weather stayed cool the runoff would be gradual and the flows at Paradise might be manageable albeit 4ft. The tools we have at hand for weather

Continued on page 4

OWA Summer Picnic & Gear Swap:

*Eagle Fern Park
 (Area 1)*

27505 Eagle Fern Rd
 Eagle Creek, OR

**Sunday,
 August 10, 2014
 from 11 AM - 3 PM**

See page 9 for details.

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Addendum:

In the River Safety Training Report featured in the May/June edition of the OWA Newsletter (page 6-8), the following paragraph was inadvertently omitted from the original article:

"Travis Reid, owner of RiverStone Adventures (www.riverstoneadventures.com). Travis has moved to Bend from Alaska. He is a Rescue 3 International Instructor in Water and Rope. He has trained firefighters in Nicaragua. Travis is the sparkplug. The high energy motivator; encouraging his cohort to triumph in the rescue relay competition."

The newsletter editor apologizes for this oversight.

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OWA MEMBERS
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Summer Rafting is here. Have fun but stay alert!

by Bruce Ripley

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer so far. It's been an interesting water year with it being very dry, then really wet, and then depending on where you were going a really bad snow year or a really good one. Some years everything is dry or everything is wet, but not this year! So that's what makes life interesting right? Variety? If you were fortunate enough to draw a permit in Idaho then so far the water has been great, a little much at first, and that caused some unfortunate cancellations, but it has come around now and things look good for the rest of the summer.

On a more somber note I think I've seen more boater drownings this year than we have in quite a while. In May we talked about upcoming trips and someone asked "Is the Klickitat hard?". My answer was "it depends". The Klickitat is a pretty straightforward river with lots of wood, and if you stay in your boat it's class III. If you get out of your boat it's not a great place to be. Since that time there have been two drownings there and one was a good friend of several club members, and a very experienced and well trained boater. In Idaho the Lower Salmon claimed the life of a Seattle firefighter in Slide rapid.

One of the reasons that I bring this up is because we all need to pay attention all of the time. This summer at our, VERY SUCCESSFUL summer float on the McKenzie I talked to several members about the safety program and encouraged them to sign up this fall and next year for the first and the rescue training. One reason is simply for the practice. I personally witnessed several events this winter and spring that turned out to be very minor and one of the reasons is because there were well-trained people in the right place at the right time. You never know when a potential hazard is going to show itself and you need to be ready for that. Part of being ready is training, part is practicing, and part is paying attention to the group. That can take a lot of time but trust me when you use those skills to help out a fellow boater it's very rewarding.

New Members

I have probably seen or received more emails from new members this year than I have for several years. Trying to figure out how to break into a new group is always the hardest part. The best thing is to do what you've done... reach out! On the web page there are instructions for using the H2OAddicts list server and that's a great tool.

In addition watch for trips that are open and peak your interest. Summer is a great time to boat but there are not many club trips, those will kick off when the water goes back up in the fall.

OWA Summer Picnic

The next event is our summer picnic at Eagle Fern park near Estacada. It will be on Sunday August 10 from 11 to 3. We will be having a gear swap and hamburgers and hotdogs will be provided, all you need to bring is a side dish. If you are new to the club this is a great way to meet people! See you there!

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Minam River Trip Report



Logging on the Minam: Continued from page 1

and hydrologic predictions are wonderful since they can give boaters great information or in our case the information to “live to boat another day”. The Selway was projected to be over 6 ft for our trip. If this wasn’t the nail in the coffin, I spoke with the Ranger again and was informed that the plows were making only ¼ mile per day and the road would not be open. She also informed me there was no penalty for canceling due to high water, over 5 ft, or road closure. We had both, so if there were some crazy kayakers who wanted to snowcat over the pass for an adrenaline rush flush I cancelled the permit.

The variety of climates in the Northwest yield extremes of river flows. For example, the Owyhee and Bruneau had no season this year due to lack of water, yet the Selway and other Idaho rivers were experiencing massive snowpack and should have extended season. In between there had to be some rivers we could get on to salvage our plans. The Lochsa, the John Day, the Minam. What? The Minam? Who runs that?

I’ll tell ya who runs that. Corey Donohue, Brent Davis, Tom Riggs, John Lulich, Kyle Riggs, Rick Carman, Cary Solberg. Men among men, heroes of adventures past and yet to come, saviors of the planet, and drinkers of PBR or whatever comes our way. Maybe it was the PBRs that influenced our decision the most.

Anyway we suffered thorough Google Docs to reassign meals and group gear and pretty much had our carpools intact. The issue with the Minam is it is in the Wilderness so there are no roads to the launch point at Minam Lodge. Well, no good adventure can have mere challenges of just running a river with its quotidian logistics. We must complicate things.

We can fly into Minam Lodge which really was the only option since the 8 mile trail from Moss Springs was still snowed under, so bringing gear in by pack horse/mule would not work either. So I called Spence Air Service in Enterprise, who had done the flight in for me on another trip 19 years earlier. Be patient and leave a message on their phone and keep calling. Eventually you will get a hold of someone and hopefully it is Joe Spence. We wanted to fly in on Sunday but being the Sabbath he would have to charge us double. We soon became devout Christians and rescheduled our air taxi for Saturday. The Cessna 206, aka the flying station wagon, would make three trips to haul our two paddle rafts, gear and people into Minam Lodge airstrip from LaGrand Airport. Joe charged us \$200 per plane load plus \$120 for his roundtrip flight from Enterprise. It turns out he flies to most of the out of the way airstrips in northeast Oregon having landed at Lord Flat, and Temperance Creek along the Snake River. Most of his revenue is from hunters wanting to get to some remote country.

We packed two rafts, the paddles, and a lot of gear into the first plane load and Lulich drew the short straw so we sent him in with the first load, strategically keeping the beer with us at the airport. Fearing that the subsequent plane loads might be too heavy we decided to lighten the load by drinking beer. Rick pointed out that we were merely shifting the ballast of the plane. I reminded everyone that we could have brought more of our beverages had we packed "light" beer. It really didn't matter because we had put a good dent in the cargo by the time Joe Spence returned to pick up Solberg, Kyle, and Bent Davis. Each round trip flight took about 45 minutes and soon Corey, Rick and I were loaded and flying over the western portions of the Wallawas to drop into the landing strip at Minam Lodge. During the flight over we did get to see a short section of the river and I noted right away there was a log jam on the river right of an island just downstream of our put in.

Minam Lodge has been a destination for hunters, pilots, hikers, and horsemen for years and changed hand four years ago having been purchased most recently by Barnes Elliot with whom John Lulich had gone to school. Since Minam Lodge is in the heart of the wilderness they like to know who is coming so they can plan meals and make up beds etc. They have a web address and a satellite phone so about a week prior to our drop in I began calling and emailing Anna Kraft, the site manager to share details of our plan. We wanted to camp in our tents, and have them provide Saturday dinner, \$35, and Sunday breakfast, \$15. This seemed reasonable to the group so I emailed her to confirm. When we arrived she informed me that she wasn't sure we were coming or just inquiring, but she had planned for our arrival nonetheless.

Anna introduced us to Alyssa, the chef, Adam and Escobar, the gardeners, and Jim the carpenter. These five staffer, grow their own vegetable with a large greenhouse for starts, compost everything, harvest trees on their property to mill at one of the two sawmills. They have tractors, farm quads, and other large equipment that had to be "Chinooked" in from La Grand. They are in the 4th year of a 5 year renovation plan and have the main lodge with upstairs bunkhouse, a couple of guest cabins, one of which is absolutely gorgeous with its pine woodwork, river stone shower, rustic chandelier, loft and wood stove, and separately a wood fired hot tub, equipment sheds, and a generator.

Anna gave us a full tour and used the quads to deliver our boats and gear to the river's edge where we would rig and set up our tents. Following Corey's lunch and a short nap, the crew hiked up river to see Red's Horse Ranch which had been acquired by the Forest Service about 6 years back. Two volunteer caretakers were doing their annual two week stint at the main house making repairs where they could. The gracious couple gave us a tour of the several tribal named cabins where hunters, hikers, horsemen used to stay with a front door only feet from the Minam River. Sadly, the Forest Service has decided to let the structures return to nature citing septic systems too near the river, sinking foundations, and general major repairs that have no plans for funding. We all return to our roots someday and Red's Horse Ranch has that destiny also. It is now included in The Wilderness and with the exception of the wheelbarrow and airplanes on the strip no mechanized equipment is allowed. The trail passes through Red's and crosses the Minam to catch the river trail and points beyond.

The weather was splendid and the gang traipsed back to Minam Lodge and drank a few beers and cocktails while Rick, John, Corey and Kyle entertained us with a game of Horseshoes as we viewed the Eagle Cap area and river from our Adirondack chairs. Kyle, Corey, and Rick shared a \$35 bottle of wine, the cheap stuff, purchased from The Lodge. At 6 pm Anna rang the supper bell and we filed into the dining hall where Alyssa had prepared, a delicious kale salad with beets, onions, skirt steak, potatoes au gratin superb, home made apple pie and home made cinnamon ice cream. Simply Marvelous.

After dinner we took turns stoking the fire and slipping into the three man hot tub which was located out in the woods down one of several less traveled paths. Once finished tubbing, we all convened at the fire pit where Adam and Escobar brought out guitars and played some tunes. Lulich took a turn playing some blues with Escobar while Adam and others stoked the bonfire and Brent and Cary stoked the whiskey fire with Alyssa participating. One by one by two we moseyed or in Carey's case, motored down to our tents to watch the stars and get lulled to sleep by the passing river.

Sunday about 1 am we began to hear the rain tinkling onto our tents and woke up to typical Oregon spring with clouds rolling up the valley depositing fresh snow about 500 feet up on the hills. True to form Brent was up at the lodge with coffee for the other early risers including Rick, Cary, and John.

Logging on the Minam: Continued on page 6

Minam River Trip Report



Logging on the Minam: Continued from page 5

The Riggs' and Corey arrived in time for the 8am breakfast which included a coconut rice dish with mushroom and meat gravy, bacon, fruit, biscuits, fresh cinnamon rolls, and of course coffee and juice. The rain was coming down hard now and we decided to enjoy the comforts of the lodge as we settled our bills and enjoyed the maps and wood stove.

THE RIVER

'Lest all the good food and drink make us soft, we decided it was time to walk down to our tents and boats and rig up for our paddle trip in the rain. "Where did all these river bags come from?" We asked each other as we laid five onto the floor of the self bailer. The bucket boat was rigged with a fishing net in the center to suspend the gear off the floor. As Brent was strapping gear into the boat I remember my comment, "the rapids are really not big on this river and the only reason we might flip is if we hit a log jam". Brent did the due diligence and continued securing gear to the boats.

I placed a geocache, Corey barely made it to the out house in time then had to deal with his wet suit. John and Rick policed the campsite and we took a group photo. It would be Corey, Rick and Captain Kyle in the bucket boat, and Brent, Rick, John and me in the self-bailer. We chose rubber boats because they roll up smaller than plastic boats for the plane ride. 11AM

As soon as we launched we paddled across the river to catch the right side of the island. I could tell we might be in for a long day given the lack of maneuverability of this heavy boat. We rounded the island and passed under the plastic water supply line that feeds the lodge from a spring on the opposite side of the river. There was Anna waving goodbye as we passed around the bend. Waving goodbye. We would have been better served had she blown us a good luck kiss, because we weren't even out of sight when the river picked up and our boat smashed into a log tossing Brent and me into the river. My Aussie hat came off and I decided to get to shore rather than chase that hat; besides I know that hat will sink. The boat dislodged from the log that caused our ejections but got stuck on some rocks 30 ft downstream so I changed course of heading to shore and waded out to the boat which we unstuck to continue our trip.

We were now approaching the log jam at the island I had seen from the air. The left channel was our choice but even it had logs that could make it a tight fit for a less than precision group of paddlers. The opening was wider than it appeared and both boats made it between the logs ok on this calm stretch. We had not gone a half a mile when up ahead there appeared to be a river wide log.

We beached our craft well upstream and walked down to survey the situation. There was a smooth 10" log bobbing in front of the fresh main channel blocker complete with strainer branches. Well guess what? We all hail from the great State of Oregon and knew that dealing with logs was somehow in our DNA. I walked back up to the Miwok and brought down the 22" pack saw and Corey, Brent, Kyle, and John began lining the rafts closer to the sweeper.

Pushing on the smooth log really did not dislodge it but we could see it would be practical to line boats over its smooth surface from the shore. The bigger problem was the broken end of the bigger branched log that jutted down to the shore from our bank. We began busting off branches and I started sawing the log to make a bankside passage for our craft. We each took about 100 strokes on the saw while Cary and Rick manned lifelines down river in case someone fell in. In less than 10 minutes we had the broken end of the log separate from the main sweeper and tossed it to the downstream side. Kyle and Brent began breaking off branches from the main log that were sticking up. Soon we had a passage way for lining both boats over the river wide sweeper located about 18 miles above the confluence with the Wallowa.

Surely the hard parts are behind us, we hoped, but in about 5 minutes we could see the river was gaining momentum as the gradient increased. What would we do if we came around a blind corner with all this weight? Would we be able to stop or somewhat control the craft?

We were into it now; the continuous class II section at the first or maybe second turn and our ability to control the boat would have elicited a "2.0" from the Russian judge with not much higher numbers from the remaining panel members. "Yikes!" there is a log pointing upstream in mid left channel and we are headed right for it in this class III rapid. "Paddle, Paddle, Paddle" was the war cry but to little avail.



We had broadsided the log and the current was starting to fold the boat around it. “High side” someone yelled, but the boat began to sink. It started to slide more toward the left bank while we were trying to paddle it toward the right into center stream. No good. The boat continued to sink as we scrambled to the high side and then it rolled. I went under the boat and then under the log and popped up about 20 ft. downstream. As I was back stroking to the left bank I saw Cary getting flushed down stream and around the bend. The cold and the swim sapped my strength but I could see John was now in the river and approaching. I was to the bank and grabbed a reach stick in case he came my way, but he clambered out above me and was working his way through the woods to see if he could find Cary.

Brent should have been captain of this ship since he was the last one on board. Actually I think he made it onto the log just in time to have the other boat slam into the upside down boat and knock him into the river as well. Again I had the reach stick but Brent too made it to shore at about the same place as John. In the mean time there goes the bucket boat chasing the dislodged Miwok around the bend. My thoughts were “where is Cary?”

Brent and I caught our breaths as we worked our way through the woods to see John, who told us Cary made it to shore and that he could see both boats. About 150 yards below our flip/wrap was Cary on shore and the Momentum crew had the Miwok in tension by throw bags, bowlines, rescue line. Hell, it could have been tied up with spaghetti, as far as I was concerned. I was just happy it was here and not 10 miles downstream. The Momentum was tied up against a small log jam on river left and Kyle and Corey had their arms around the main log hanging onto it and had both boats somewhat tied to this precarious floating anchor. The Miwok was beyond the Momentum upside down on the downstream side of the large boulder.

I carefully walked out to this island rock on the downstream side of the logjam to assess the situation. The river maintained its rapid flow in the main channel so the place to take care of business was here. Corey wound up on of the rescue bags and tossed it to Brent who met me halfway out on the log with the rope and carabiner. Back on the island boulder I jumped down onto the inverted raft and made my way to the downstream end to clip the carabiner and rope to the D ring. I climbed back up on the rock to secure my footing and tossed the free end of the rope to Cary and John who were on the shore at the one boat eddy. Corey, Rick and Kyle fed out the line holding the Miwok while I kept it from snagging on the rock. Brent, Cary and John pulled the craft ashore.

The thoughts going through my head were from “Thunderdome” as I looked at Cary and our boat – “Well Mr. Raggedyman, ain’t we a pair”. Even though we had flip lines we didn’t rig the boat as practiced in the pool, but just muscled it over with the four guys who had just done the Minam backstroke. The gear was there but one bag was suspiciously heavy. Mine. I had gone against my advice and packed too much stuff and consequently could not get a good roll on my river bag. It must have weighed 150 lbs. Cary said his dry bag was not living up to its billing either. The prospects of spending the rainy night along the banks of the Minam had lost some of its luster.

We counted our paddles and came up with five for the two boats. The Garren map of the river showed we hadn’t even passed the Little Minam and were in for about 3 miles of continuous whitewater ahead with a short break followed by another two miles of continuous whitewater. With the exception of Corey, we were all thinking this democracy business of paddle rafting was for the birds. Actually our paddle rafting crews looked more like anarchy. Give us our monarchy of oar boats.

Logging on the Minam: Continued from page 6

Well, sometimes you have to play the cards you are dealt, and our hands were full of jokers, but no one was joking now. John Lulich who had guided on the Main Salmon suggested we put Corey into the self bailer with the original crew and have Kyle and Rick R2 the bucket boat from the bow compartment. The Miwok would have two front paddlers, a middle passenger and two in the stern to switch off having a paddle and being captain. Too bad all or our Fireball was buried. We could have used a shot. With the gear drained and secured again we paddled out of the micro eddy, which was the only micro eddy we saw for miles and headed back to the main channel. Fortunately the river straightened out so we had good sight distance for logs and other obstacles. The plan was to go for about 10 minutes and pull over to check on how the bucket boat or our boat was faring in the new configurations.

John was our boat captain for this shift and we were doing quite well and I looked upstream to see Kyle and Rick doing even better in their low rider bow heavy boat. The river reminded me of the Metolius or the Tieton but more continuous in nature as we finally passed the Little Minam which gave us our bearings. The Garren map had been strapped to the thwart for easy viewing and kept its place during the flip. We made an attempt to stop to regroup but the first location was a bust due to our river speed. The second attempt I was assigned as anchorman to jump ashore and grab a branch while holding the boat. Others quickly jumped off and grabbed a line and a branch while walked up the river to catch Rick and Kyle as they barreled in for a hot landing.

Solberg, being master of comfort (not just Southern) suggested we paddle all the way to Minam Motel. It was raining, one boat had no hats and the idea of sleeping in a wet suit all night just did not appeal to me or any of the other members of the Minam Swim Team so it was a no brainer to grind up the miles and get to some dry digs.

We shoved off again and those who weren't paddling were scanning downstream for logs or other river obstacles giving advance warning to the captain. Behind our boat was Rick and Kyle who actually looked like they knew what they were doing. As Rick said "It's hard to sink a submarine". We stopped again with a ram-the-shore maneuver to regroup and get the thumbs up from all. To keep warm we traded times paddling and saw that we were about 8 miles downstream when we passed Murphy Creek. I remembered camping there on the previous trip. The river seemed to calm down a little as it developed more turns. John seemed to have the hang of this captain thing when we came around a corner and there was a log sticking out into our channel. The commands to paddle hard were coming fast and furious as he pivoted the boat to try to position us out of harm's way. Everyone who had a paddle dug in and Corey and I kissed our butts goodbye.

Wham. We slammed into the 14" diameter log protruding from the boulder on our left. Brent and I were on the upstream tube and John was next to me in the stern. I'm not sure what happened next because Brent, John, and I were swimming the Minam again. Corey and Cary used their sphincter muscles to get an extra grip on the tubes and stay in the boat. We had so much mass and momentum that we broke the log after the impact tossed the three of us. I climbed back into the boat with the worm motion since I could not touch bottom, then helped John in while Corey and Cary did something to get Brent back in the boat. No paddles lost. Kyle and Rick, thanked us for doing this extra bit of logging on the Minam because they said they would have hit it also. We pulled in for another regroup and Cary pulled out two granola bars that we all shared to get some energy and heat generated.

We soon began cutting the corners of the river to the inside knowing that the debris accumulates on the outside curves. This is easier said than done in overloaded under-powered paddle boats. To say the least we were now a little wood weary but the canyon began to open up as did the hillside flora. We approached another left turn and could only see log jams ahead and shouted commands to exit river left, but as we drew nearer it became clear we could make the passage between the log jam straight ahead and the one jutting in from the left.

The bridge that accesses some property about 4 mile from the confluence came into view and it had very edgy abutments that look like an immediate boat wrap and game changer so we avoided it like the plague. We continued to bump off or go over the occasional rock but we soon saw highway 82 up the hill on the left and knew civilization was at nearby. On river left was a dim sign in the bushes. "Danger Fish Trap Ahead". Where were the signs "Danger Log Jams Ahead" when we needed them? No fear we just smash them, saw them, or break them out of the way 'cause we are the Minam Loggers.

Anyway we skirted the fish traps on the right and came around the corner passing underneath the highway bridge only to see Kyle and Rick headed for river right on the swift flowing Wallowa. They were headed for the Motel and had visions of landing at the normal launch site for the Grand Ronde Trips. We barely made the last eddy and actually had to drag the boat back up to it. I laughed as I looked across the river to see Rick and Kyle dragging their boat back upstream through the brush to catch the launch area owned by Minam Motel. 5 PM. Minam river 1900 cfs.

Next time, I will use erector set rowing frames with one swampy per boat. Do day hikes from Minam Lodge and/or stay there for your accommodations. Row out to Minam in one day to keep the gear light.

MINAM MOTEL AND BEYOND

We down rigged the Miwok on river left and I hiked over the bridge to the Motel to inquire about staying on their lawn. Lottie and Grant Ritchie, the proprietors of Minam Motel and Minam Raft Rental were more than welcoming and offered us the use of their dryer which we initially declined saying we would dry out our clothes and gear by having a group wrestling match in them. That thought lasted about as long as it took Solberg to rent a room with a kitchenette.

Logging on the Minam: Continued on page 11

Oregon Whitewater Association



and gear swap

at Eagle Fern Park

(Area 1)

27505 SE Eagle Fern Road, Eagle Creek, Oregon 97022

Sunday, August 10th 11-3 p.m.

Details:

- There is a large covered shelter, with picnic tables (so come rain or shine)
- Picnic tables located right next to the beautiful Eagle Creek
- Throw rope competition (bring a throw rope)
- Located next to playground
- Well behaved DOGS allowed
- Alcohol is allowed in the park, so bring your own

Gear Swap and Sale:

Swap or sell your new or used boating gear. From boats to bags, all gear is welcome. There are great deals every year!

Provided: hamburgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers and non-alcoholic beverages (pop and juice)

You Bring: a pot luck side dish or dessert, lawn chair or beach towel, the whole family

Fee: \$5.00 vehicle pass at the entrance gate

RSVP: vice-president@oregonwhitewater.org

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Logging on the Minam: Continued from page 8

Since we had arranged Minam Motel to do our shuttle, our vehicles were there for the first leg as our plan was to re rig the paddle boats to oar boats and add four more craft to the floatilla for the Grand Ronde – Troy segment. I drove my truck over to pick up river bags and paddlers while others helped Rick and Kyle remove gear from their raft. Corey and Cary chose the comforts of the motel room while the rest of us set up tents and drying racks in the yard. As soon as the dryer was available I started the spin dry cycle on the washing machine followed by a stint in the dryer. I ran three loads and Cary ran one.

I made elk stroganoff, bean salad, and green beans for dinner on the combination refrigerator stove in the kitchenette. We dug into our beers for downstream and celebrated the fact that our logging adventure on the Minam did not upset the River Gods who let us pass for another day's boating.

We rigged our oar boats the next morning and made a beer run to Walllowa to make up for lost ballast at the airport and the night before. To save one shuttle fee to Troy, John put his trailer onto my truck using Rick's stinger and cut the lock off Rick's stinger and bolted his trailer ball to Rick's bumper. We would pick up John's Subaru on the way back through Minam at the end of the trip.

The Monday launch at 11:05 saw only one group ahead of us and we were all more relaxed after a good night's sleep and the fact that we were on an easy river using oar boats and all the amenities they can carry. The Sun was breaking through the clouds and beers were poppin'. The Minam Roller rapid just drew dismissive smiles from us as we passed through it. Above the confluence of the Walllowa and Grand Ronde we stopped for lunch and it was kind of a smorgasbord of make up lunches highlighted by "evil Cary's" (Cary Walsh) pickled eggs.

Since we must make our own excitement if nature does not throw us some, we chose to camp at Clear Creek, a very nice and large camp about 15 miles from Minam. We landed at the upper portion of the river bar and I was walking back from scouting out the down bar campsites when I hear "oar!, get the oar!" There it was out in the current looking like it was trying out to be the pace oar for the "Minam 500". John made a grab for it but the water was getting deep; Rick was taking his bow line up to tie off when he stretched out to grab it and promptly filled his open drysuit and wisely retreated. Corey was in Rick's boat for the day refreshing his rowing lessons. I saw his deer in the headlights look, jumped into Rick's boat and chased the oar down, grabbed it and pulled hard just in time to make it to shore before passing the rock of no return. John and Corey walked down and did the African Queen remake and towed me back upstream. The lower campsite was better anyway and Kyle new it so he jettisoned his oar from upstream to make it happen. We may not have good plans but we have effective plans.

We played Harmon Killabrew, or as Cary contorts it Harry Killabrain, around the campfire that night followed by the Kyle Cory Wrestlemania. I think Cory lost at Harmon Killabrew so he had to change games as the rest of us retired.

John had hiked up the ridge Tuesday morning to give us the report that the river fog would be lifting soon. He made us bagels, ham, eggs on the griddle. As we were rigging up to pull out at 10:00 Sundowner expeditions pulled in with a drift boat and a raft to take their client for a hike up the hill.

We bid adieu and floated through more riffles and passed what looked to be an outdoor school of 20 just launching on river left. We hopscotched with them as we stopped to pick up driftwood for our firepan and they stopped to explore other river side attractions. Lunch was across from Grossman Creek at a nice campsite. Further down past the Third Island we would pull into an excellent camp above Slickrock Creek.

This sunny camp with a beach was great for drying the dew and rain from our tents from the previous night. We had several rounds of Bocce Ball and more lies around the campfire. Cary treated us to an aerial show on this windless night with some type of flying Chinese lantern. We watched it disappear into the before it went out. Awesome. Carman made the mistake of declaring he was going to outlast me as far as staying up that night. We both lasted for an hour and an hour and one minute respectively before answering the call of taps.

Wednesday we packed up our gear, even our lovely groover which had a spectacular view of the river, and headed downstream. Kyle noticed a hernia on the top tube of the Miwok, no doubt the result of our logging activity on the Minam a few days prior. We solo boated, except Kyle and Corey who paired up in the bucket boat, down to the take out at Troy under the bridge. If it were a busy weekend this one boat take out would be a crowding issue and one might be better advised to take out at Powataka Bridge or Mud Creek.

We drove back to Minam via Flora and the Joseph Creek Overlook to connect John's trailer to his Subaru for his solo drive to Bend. At Minam we ran into Mike Keating and others who were joining Dave Graf's OWA trip on the Grand Ronde with a Thursday launch. The rest of us were headed to the Portland area. The Grand Ronde at Troy was about 6500 cfs as I recall.

INGREDIENTS

8 oz. orzo pasta
1 lb. cooked chicken, chopped or shredded
olive oil
1 onion, sliced thinly
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 oz. pitted kalamata olives, chopped
4 oz. oil-packed sundried tomatoes
14 oz can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
4 oz. spinach
4 oz. crumbled feta cheese (optional)
salt & pepper
red pepper flakes (optional)

Yield: 4 Servings



Mediterranean Pasta

Submitted by Traci Stenson Hildner

DIRECTIONS

1. At home*: Cook pasta until al dente. Drain, then rinse pasta under cold water to stop the cooking. Toss it with a teaspoon or two of olive oil to keep it from sticking together, and put it in a container or large ziploc bag for transporting.
2. At camp: In a large pot, sauté onion in 1 tsp olive oil until softened. Add in garlic and cooked chicken and sauté 3 minutes.
3. Then dump in olives, sun dried tomatoes, artichoke hearts and spinach. Sauté until spinach just begins to wilt.
4. Add in the pasta and feta and stir until warm. Add salt, pepper and red pepper flakes to taste.

*Note: Yes, you can cook the pasta at camp instead, but I find that cooking it at home beforehand means I don't have to wait for water to boil at camp; particularly helpful in some of those super-windy locales.



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Just how dangerous are rattlesnakes?

By Alan St. John

Originally Published on the Deschutes Land Trust Blog - www.deschuteslandtrust.org

As a nature writer/photographer specializing in reptiles, I'm often asked about the potential danger of rattlesnakes. With the warming weather, both hikers and rattlers will be out and about in Central Oregon. Most people (unless they're herpetology enthusiasts who purposefully look for turtles, lizards and snakes) have two primary questions of concern:

Will these venomous snakes advance towards a human and attack?

What hiking locations can I choose that are NOT inhabited by rattlesnakes?

The answer for the first query will allay needless fears. No, a rattlesnake will not aggressively slither towards you, its fangs dripping venom. Take comfort in the fact that snakes of all species fear us humans, and in most circumstances will immediately crawl away and hide. So if you encounter one of these buzz-tailed serpents, merely move away from it and allow the reptile to flee in the other direction. Simple as that, no danger involved.

A defensively coiled rattler can generally strike outward no more than about half of its body length. Only the relatively small Northern Pacific Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis oregonus*) is native to Central Oregon. Despite what you've heard, the larger diamondbacks and timber rattlesnakes occur in other regions of North America. Our local species averages only about thirty to thirty-six inches in length, with rare individuals growing a bit beyond four-feet. Hence, if you remain no closer than six feet, you're well outside of striking range and perfectly safe.

Once in a great while, people are indeed bitten by rattlesnakes and end up in the hospital for treatment (envenomation from our indigenous species is rarely, if ever fatal). However, considering that our area is a recreational mecca with thousands of folks annually trekking the many trails, fishing along waterways, and a myriad of other activities, it's a very uncommon event. Usually, bites happen when someone accidentally steps on an unseen rattlesnake, or while scrambling in a rocky place inadvertently places a hand on one that's hidden in a crevice. When enjoying the outdoors, just use the commonsense safety measures of wearing boots that protectively cover the ankle; look first before sitting down in tall grass where a rattler might be concealed; and most importantly, don't put your hand in holes where unknown critters might lurk. Be especially careful along streams and rivers during warm weather, because that's one of the more common places for venomous snake bites to occur. In the vicinity of water, people are usually barefooted or merely wearing skimpy sandals that offer very little protection. Also, with the ambient sound of rushing water it's often difficult to hear the warning "buzz" of a rattlesnake. More than likely, though, you'll never see a rattlesnake because they spend most of their time in hiding.

As for the second question, generally speaking, if your nature jaunt is taking place in Central Oregon's mountains above 6,000-foot elevation, you can relax with the buzz-tail paranoia. At our northerly latitudes in the Northwest, rattlesnakes are usually absent at those colder, lofty zones. For example, although a century ago rattlers reportedly occurred in the environs of Bend, they were exterminated decades ago. Therefore, it's safe to assume that upstream from Bend in the Deschutes River drainage you won't encounter rattlesnakes. Likewise for the forested heights of Newberry National Volcanic Monument, and the popular wilderness trails in the Cascade Range above Sisters and Camp Sherman. Northern Pacific rattlesnakes are denizens of lower-elevation, dry, rocky habitats in sagebrush country and sparse, sunbathed juniper-pine woodlands. Consequently, utilize the previously advised prudent precautions concerning rattlesnakes at destinations such as Smith Rock, Lake Billy Chinook, Powell Buttes, and the Prineville/Ochoco reservoirs.

Timing can also lessen your chances of a rattlesnake encounter. Of course during the cold winter when reptiles hibernate, that possibility is zero. But even during the warmer months, choosing the time of day for your outing can make a big difference. When early spring's sunny April days initially rise above 70 degrees, rattlesnakes are just emerging from their rocky den sites, basking at the mouths of crevices. At that season, if you avoid south-facing, stony slopes before the rattlers disperse into the surrounding terrain by May, there is little risk of coming across one. Similarly, in the autumn days of late September and early October when rattlesnakes return to their dens, use the same avoidance method of steering clear of rock ledges and talus hillsides that have a southerly exposure. In between those two seasons during summer's hot weather, rattlers tend to mostly remain hidden in sheltered retreats at midday, coming out in the more moderate temperatures of the morning and evening hours, or after dark on warm July and August nights.

Probably no other native animal in our region generates as many fears, false perceptions and tall tales as the rattlesnake. Hopefully, after reading the truth about this unique creature, hikers will stride away from the trailhead with less apprehension. Instead, perhaps there will be a tingle of excitement about treading ground that's still wild enough to harbor this icon of the American West's natural landscapes.

*Alan St. John is a naturalist, photographer, and author of several books including *Oregon's Dry Side: Exploring East of the Cascade Crest* (Timber Press, 2007) and *Reptiles of the Northwest* (Lone Pine Publishing, 2002).*



Knot of the Month - Figure 8 on Bight

Each month we will showcase essential knots you should know for river situations

Overview

- The figure 8 on a Bight forms a permanent loop in the rope.
- It is a very strong knot and can be tied anywhere on the rope (not just the end)
- Drawback: It cannot be tied around anything so you must clip into it with a carabineer or tie another knot/webbing into it.

Use

- At the end of a rope as an anchor point. Anywhere within the rope for a pig rig. In the middle of a haul line to pull against



bight

Tied: The same as a Figure 8 but you start off with a bight



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River Tip: The Results Part II Submitted by Jim Collins & Dan Hudson

Dan Hudson, an experienced Rescue 3 instructor replied to my original request for suggestions on how to get a throw bag to reach a boat that is more than a throw bag away. Dan offers a second option to the expensive grappling hook and is available at most rafting supply stores. It is called a snag plate. They usually cost about \$24.95 retail or you can purchase a throw bag with a snag plate. It is designed to be carried at the end of the rope in your throw bag and deploys last when you toss your bag. Your toss should cross over the other throw bag line, and snag onto it with the plate. Once you hook the other throw bag, you can pull the line over. Of course, this depends on timing, accuracy, and the other side of the river being able to attach a second throw bag to their line to extend the length.

Dan also recommends carrying throw bags with 6570 feet of line. Most bags only come with 50' or options for longer lengths. Most people can deploy a throw bag 65', which would extend the toss an additional 15' and may take care of the reach issue. He has seen throw bags with 100' of rope that virtually nobody could toss the entire distance. He states the snag plate is also a very useful tool for performing single shore foot entrapment rescues. He demonstrates this skill in his Rescue 3 International certification courses.

Another practical and low-cost suggestion. Thank you Dan!



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A background image showing a person in a kayak navigating through white water rapids. The scene is dynamic with splashing water and a person in a blue kayak in the distance.

Grande Ronde Trip Report



Grande Ronde, Minam to Heller Bar

Submitted by Dave Graf

22 adventurers planned for months to run the historic and mighty Grande Ronde River from Minam to Heller Bar. We planned to beat the Memorial Day weekend rush by launching a little ahead of the bubble on Thursday morning. Many of us met initially at the hotel or the campground and then went for some very good dinner and beer in Enterprise at Terminal Gravity Brew Pub. On the way into Enterprise we were treated to views of the snow in the Wallowa's that would be driving us downstream on the Wallowa and Grand Ronde at a very rapid pace.

Thursday morning knowing that trying to keep track of 12 boats on an extremely swift river was not practical, we broke into two smaller groups, each with a lead and sweep boat. We had an expert team of tandem canoe paddlers lead the first group and act as the rabbits to look for large camps. They knew the GPS locations of the large camps and could easily get in and out of these camps to check out the available real estate. At this level there were few if any eddies and landing on the banks was always fairly difficult. Even knowing the locations was not totally adequate since the camps and their conditions change over time. The first night our large group jammed into some very small accommodations where the only thing that saved us from the close quarter snoring at night was a roaring river. But we had covered 22 miles the first day in less than 4 hours. The evenings meals were well prepared and the stories and lies around the fire pan began. Speed over the river bottom this first day was about 7 mph. There were no difficult rapids, but the river was shallow and we met another rafter that had lost an entire oar in this section and they had not found it. The first camp was below Martins Misery Rapid.

The 2nd day was planned as a short run of about 10 river miles. This gave us a chance to sort out our gear, packing/repacking and then a camp set up without being rushed for time. It also spaced our planned camps out with the known large camps we needed below Troy. It was a good plan, we set up a nice camp with our large fly and everyone got very comfortable. Then Mother Nature proceeded to show why large flies are a problem even when anchored to trees with very well tensioned ridgelines. First there were some minor problems with the big fly, easily corrected and adjusted. Then after those adjustments there were some more incidents that got everyone's attention. Then we had a substantial burst and we made the decision that the fly had to come down and we would just deal with the world wide out in the open. The crew quickly went to work and got the big fly down without hurting anyone or damaging the fly. There was some rain after that, but not so serious as to be a big problem, and the continued heavy wind just made lighting the stove difficult. But we sorted out some nice dinners the wind finally died down and the stories and lies around the campfire began again. Camp was at about RM 61.



The 3rd morning had us packing quickly and getting underway about 9 AM. Another very swift day on the river with a stop in Troy to dump the groovers, buy some minor supplies and leave behind three of our boaters. The stop proved entertaining or painful depending on which side of the groover dumping fiasco you were on, but it got done and no one was killed in the incident, although weapons were getting drawn. Saturday night was Gordy's Ribs and Bean night and most of us had done the deal with him to provide his particularly good ribs. Barbecues were setup, fired up and loaded with his precooked smoked ribs. Having Gordy with his large group cooking experience on a trip is invaluable. There were no unhappy campers after this meal. The camp was just downstream from Grouse Creek and just before we crossed the state line.

The fourth day we knew was going to be tougher. We all wanted to make the last day on the river as short as possible so we could all get home, so we agreed to go as close to the Narrows as we could stand to go. 30+ miles even on a very swift river is a long day for most of us. We used a large camp below Hackberry Gulch and enjoyed some fine real estate with plenty of room for the group and along with a few snakes. A medium sized rattler provided some pre-dinner entertainment. Another scrumptious dinner was made; more stories and more lies were told. Then we discussed the need to get going even earlier than we had been the previous mornings. Some took heed and others not so much to get to the tents a little earlier.



The 5th day came early and everyone was up early and made ready for the biggest rapid on this river, The Narrows. Plans were made for the groups, safety plans were sorted out and everyone was moving just after 8 AM feeling just a little apprehensive about a rapid that is so very changeable with different flows. The first group got into the scout point, checked the three parts of the rapid out and made their runs and then set up safety for the rest of us. The larger group arrived at the scout point and made the hike downstream to study this interesting stretch. Part one was just big Class II waves with no particular challenges for the rafts. Part two on the other hand had a nasty hole that should be avoided with lots of other big haystacks to run. Part three of this rapid had a nasty feature that could be avoided on the left. Flows were well above 7,000 CFS. Everyone made the run successfully including our canoe friends who simply decided to get it done a little swamped. This is a serious rapid on a generally easy river, so be prepared if you choose to run this section at high flows.

We all made Heller Bar by noon and started the process of loading up, saying our goodbyes and dealing the inevitable issues of getting a long way home. This was a great trip and adventure. The river corridor is simply stunning from Minam to Heller Bar. This may be the swiftest river I have ever rowed, my double wide cat averaged 7 mph over the nearly 90 miles and there were sections that the moving average was well higher than that. So even though the difficulty was not high, the action was nearly constant. The Narrows at the levels we saw is a serious rapid to be managed and worked through. I didn't find any video of the Narrows that came anywhere close to what we saw in my research. Most of the video shows the river in a very small slot with much lower flows. Do not confuse those images with what you will encounter at high spring flows.

Upcoming Trips

Submitted by Pat Barry,
Trip Editor



Please go to the OWA website for additional details on each trip, [CLICK HERE](#)
Or go to <http://oregonwhitewater.org/calendar/trip-calendar>

9.13-14 Sat-Sun	Tieton River	II/III+	David Elliott	dce@dcell.com	
9.13-15 Sat-Mon	Hell's Canyon	III/IV	Mike Moses	mtymo_@hotmail.com	509-240-4220
9.20 Sat	Santiam Fall Colors Float	II/III	Matt Saucy	sawdusty9@yahoo.com	971-241-5396
11.9-11 Sat-Mon	Rogue River	III/IV	Scott Ogren	scott@scottogren.com	503-267-9785

PAST OWA RAFTING TRIPS

5.16-19 Fri-Mon	Rogue River Lodge	III/IV	Van McKay	vanm1@aol.com	360-737-3148
5.22-26 Thu-Mon	Grande Ronde	III/IV	Dave Graf	dmgraf55@centurytel.net	
5.30-6.1 Fri-Sun	Upper N. Umpqua	III/IV	Walt Bamaan	wbamaan@wmni.net	
6.7 Sat	Klickitat River	II/III+	Doug Smith	Doug@davidsmithmapping.com	503-232-5285
6.13-15 Fri-Sun	Lower Deschutes Women's Trip	II/III	Carol Beatty	caroldon1@comcast.net	503-816-6172
6.26-29 Fri-Sun	McKenzie River	III	Brenda Bunce	brenda.bunce@gmail.com	360-931-4224
5.10-11 Sat-Sun	Lower Cispus	II/III	Tina and Eric Myren	TNEMYREN@gmail.com	
5.9-11 Fri-Sun	Grande Ronde	III	Eric & Candace Ball	balle@pocketinet.com	509-529-6134
4.25-27 Fri-Sun	Lower N. Umpqua	II/III	Brenda Bunce	brenda.bunce@gmail.com	360-931-4224
4.12 Sat	Deschutes River Tax Relief Float	III/IV	Bill Goss	zanng@msn.com	503-757-4659
3.22-24 Sat-Mon	Lower Deschutes Spring Break Float	II/III	Scott Ogren	scott@scottogren.com	503-267-9785
3.8 Sat	Merrie's Deschutes Bday Float	III/IV	Merrie King		503-490-1743
2.15-17 Sat-Mon	Rogue River	III/IV	Steve Oslund	stevilone@gmail.com	503-709-7661
1.1 Wed	Sandy River	II/III	Val Shaul	val.shaul@frontier.com	503-805-8991



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