

# WINTER APPEAL 2010



Autumn on the Sol Duc River in Olympic National Park, WA

## Dear American Whitewater Member,

As you determine your charitable gifts for the end of the year, consider the value of an investment in American Whitewater. The proven track record of our river stewardship staff, combined with a lean administration, means that more of your donation goes to on-the-ground results. Anyone who rafts, canoes, kayaks or floats a whitewater river has American Whitewater to thank for providing important leadership on river stewardship efforts around the country. American Whitewater has demonstrated tremendous success in building coalitions between partner organizations and agencies leading to positive results that benefit the rivers you enjoy.

One of American Whitewater's primary river stewardship goals is to restore watersheds by leveraging opportunities to reform

hydropower dams. The 30–50 year hydropower license has proven to be one of the most powerful and effective river restoration tools available today. When we improve the operations of hydropower dams, we restore balance to river ecosystems that have been altered for power production. Through this process we restore fish populations, re-establish healthy river environments, protect valuable watershed land, increase recreational opportunities and bring economic benefits to the communities that surround these remarkable rivers.

Take a few minutes to review projects that the American Whitewater Stewardship Team is working on. There has never been a better time to support these projects with a financial contribution to American Whitewater.

## WILD OLYMPICS AND RIVER CONSERVATION THROUGH WILD AND SCENIC DESIGNATION (WA)

This summer, in partnership with other conservation and recreation organizations, American Whitewater launched our Wild Olympics Campaign focused on a dozen major river systems on Washington State's Olympic Peninsula that represent important opportunities for river conservation. The region is unique with watersheds having several feet of precipitation each year providing an incredible number of river miles in a small geographic area with dozens of whitewater runs that pass through towering old-growth forest. Our specific objectives will be the designation of additional river miles for protection through the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, new wilderness areas that protect key watersheds, and additions to Olympic National Park that enhance watershed protection.



East Fork Humptulips River in Olympic National Forest, WA

This campaign is one of several where American Whitewater is actively engaged to provide permanent protection for rivers like the Rogue (OR), Middle Fork Snoqualmie (WA), Illabot Creek (WA), Molalla (OR), Lower Salmon (ID), Volcano Country Rivers of the Lewis and Cispus watersheds (WA), Nooksack (WA), and a number of rivers in Montana. In addition we are working with our agency partners and other organizations to form a Wild and Scenic Rivers Coalition to serve as a national voice for stewardship, effective management, and protection of Wild and Scenic Rivers across the country. Paddlers continue to be the most effective advocates for river conservation and with your continued support we can maintain our strong track record of unparalleled effectiveness.

### IMPROVING FLOW MANAGEMENT ON THE DOLORES RIVER (CO/UT)

Paddlers who have had the rare opportunity to enjoy the wilderness quality of a Dolores River trip, understand the unique character of this icon of the desert Southwest. The Dolores River carves one of America's premier river canyons through southwestern Colorado and Utah. Opportunities to paddle the Dolores are rare and unpredictable, thanks in large part to the Bureau of Reclamation's McPhee Dam and Reservoir. American Whitewater has received several requests for assistance from our members,



Dolores River, CO  
Photo by: Chris Smith

affiliate clubs, and partner organizations in the Dolores River basin to help address multiple aspects of river health, including utilizing flows for environmental and recreational needs, and reservoir spill management. We are working closely with respected social scientists and nearly 400 paddlers to study paddling opportunities and river flows critical to a healthy Dolores River. In the coming year we will continue our work, developing and negotiating new alternatives to managing releases out of McPhee Reservoir that will benefit river health and provide improved recreational opportunities. With your support we can give paddlers a leadership role in working with state, federal and local agencies to ensure that there are sufficient and predictable spring peak flows on the Dolores River.

### RESERVING YOUR RIGHT TO ENJOY THE RIVERS OF COLORADO

As we look forward to 2011, river access will play a large part in American Whitewater's work plan. Access conflicts between the general paddling public and power companies, landowners, or state agencies have seen a resurgence and many of these conflicts have not reached resolution. American Whitewater continues to educate agencies and the paddlesports public on Federal and State access laws. American Whitewater and our members testified in the State House and Senate in defense of our right to float in

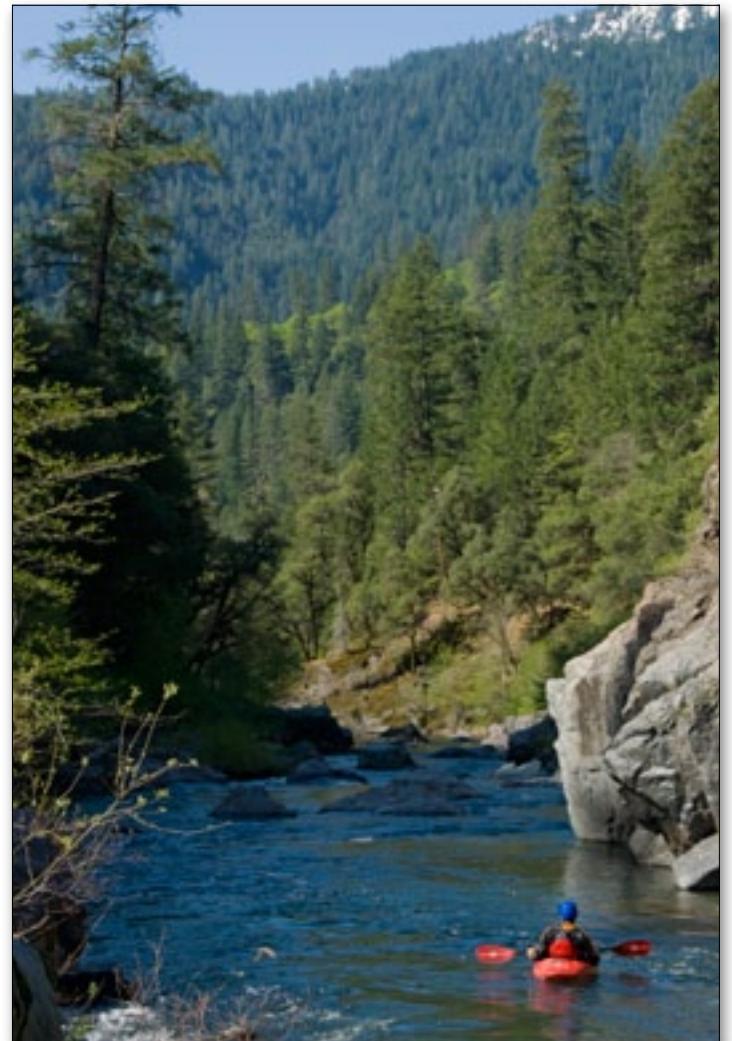


Taylor River, CO  
Photo by: Nathan Fey

Colorado. We are negotiating with legislators, agency officials and county governments to recognize paddlers use of rivers. American Whitewater is serving as an advisor to the Governor's River Access Task Force, and we are working to expose the continuing efforts of landowners to close whitewater runs. With your support, American Whitewater can defend our existing right to float on our nation's headwaters streams and rivers – and in Colorado, develop Statewide guidelines that eliminate conflicts between landowner interests and the general paddling public.

### RESTORING SPRING FLOWS ON THE MCLOUD RIVER (CA)

The McCloud River is quite possibly the best Class III/IV multi-day run in California. While many boaters are familiar with the free-flowing run on the McCloud River above McCloud Reservoir, relatively few people have been able to experience the 25 miles of the lower McCloud due to water diversions that leave only a small fraction of flow below the reservoir. It has been American Whitewater's goal to restore high spring flows that would mimic the natural conditions that existed before the dams. These flows would help maintain the river channel and improve habitat for trout, frogs, and hopefully salmon runs that can be restored on this river. Unfortunately, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has different plans.



McCloud River, CA  
Photo by: Darin McQuoid

*"Given the importance of the existing blue ribbon fishery in the Lower McCloud River, we give more weight to safe angling opportunities than to recreational boating." FERC Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

What is forgotten in this statement is the need to restore overall ecosystem health and the positive benefits flow restoration brings that extend well beyond recreational boating. With your support, we will be able to educate FERC and other state and federal resource agencies on the benefits of more natural flows on the McCloud – an outcome that will benefit paddlers and the critters who live here.

### EXPANDING THE CATALOG OF CLASSICS IN THE YUBA RIVER WATERSHED (CA)

American Whitewater has already seen many successes in our preliminary work on the Yuba River. In addition to improving flows over the last two years on some of the best whitewater runs in California – Fordyce Creek, 49 to Bridgeport, Edwards to Purdon – we have also opened up several new runs destined to be classics including Yuba Gap and Canyon Creek. We have also been able to negotiate public flow information for all of these runs. However, our work is far from over.

The Yuba River system is a complex maze of canals, tunnels, dams and powerhouses. Figuring out how it all works has been an enormous challenge. American Whitewater has worked hard to develop the technical expertise necessary to fully understand the operation of this enormous water system. Knowledge is power, and the knowledge that we have developed here will give us the power to improve the rivers in the Yuba basin.



Fordyce Creek, CA  
Photo by: Darin McQuoid

American Whitewater has spent thousands of hours and attended well over 100 meetings on this project. The relicensing of the Pacific Gas and Electric and the Nevada Irrigation District hydroelectric projects has reached a critical phase. Over the next year and a half, we will be working to develop the flow requirements that will be contained in the new 30 – 50 year license for this project. With your support, we can finish the job.

## B RINGING NEW PADDLING OPPORTUNITIES TO THE NORTHEAST: GREEN RIVER (VT)

Dams have a way of hiding whitewater, sometimes right under paddlers' noses. This is the case on the Green River, in northern Vermont, where paddlers have recently discovered a beautiful little creek run just downstream of a reservoir renown for its flat-water boating opportunities. Members of the Vermont Paddlers Club were quick to investigate the Green River when the word got out that the dam was up for relicensing. Their explorations revealed a treasure of a run, and American Whitewater quickly got involved to help navigate the complicated relicensing process.



Green River, VT  
Photo by: Ryan McCall

We have used this tried and true method across the country, and on many New England rivers to secure releases, flow information and river access. In the coming year, we will be working with the power company and local paddlers to document the recreational value of the Green River, and to study the flows needed to support both recreational and ecological values. It will likely take a few years, but with your help we expect to negotiate new releases on the Green River that are good for the river and dish out some awesome micro-creek'in.

## B OATING OPPORTUNITIES ON THE NANTY, TUCK, AND CHEOAH FINALLY ON THE HORIZON (NC)

The word on the street is that we'll have new federal licenses for the dams on the Nantahala and Tuckasegee rivers by the end of 2010. Dillsboro Dam had to be removed before the licenses could be issued, and Dillsboro Dam is now a thing of the past. The licenses will almost certainly contain a requirement to provide releases on the West Fork of the Tuckasegee and the Upper Nantahala. That means 2011 will be a busy year as we defend the releases from any challenges, and get the rivers ready for recreational use. On the Nantahala, this means working with local representatives on a plan for shuttles, new access areas and traffic management. On the West Fork of the Tuckasegee, it means trail building and new access area construction.

These projects have been in the works for 10 years, and American Whitewater has remained committed to wrapping them up. We negotiated a really good conservation and access agreement in 2003 and since then have been leading advocates for the recent removal of Dillsboro Dam. We are making steady progress and with your support, and our continued dedication to this project in 2011, we'll be pushing for 2013 releases on the West Fork Tuck and Nantahala Cascades.

## Support American Whitewater's Voice in River Management

All of these projects, and many more, will require additional work into 2011 and beyond. Your support will provide American Whitewater with the means to continue our river stewardship and meet the goals of our mission, "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." By contributing to American Whitewater today, with the enclosed reply card, you will be a major supporter of American Whitewater's river stewardship success, and improve the ability for you, your friends, and your family to continue to enjoy rivers for years to come. We are a lean and efficient organization with 84 cents of every dollar going to directly support our river stewardship work. Critical projects are at stake and we need your support now to give all of these projects the attention they deserve.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please consider making a year end, tax-deductible [donation to American Whitewater.](#)

Thanks for your support!