

# The Confluence

The Journal of Colorado Plateau River Guides

Number 27, December 2003

Comments on Motors

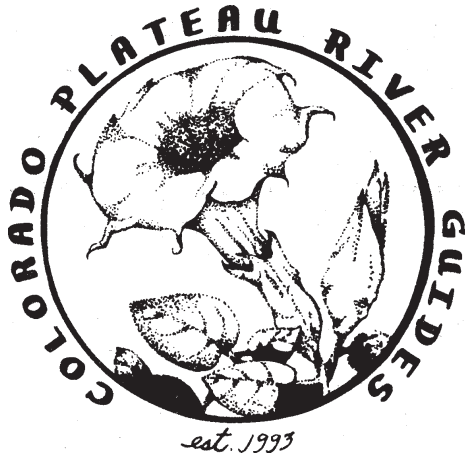
Poetry

Inscriptions:

Howland & Wheeler  
The Place No One Knew  
Dinosaur National Monument

Coal Creek Dam Site

Sediment Happens



Persistent Drought

Colorado River Hydrology

Glen Canyon Dam Failure

Southwest Rock Art

Canyonlands Flash Flood!

Reservoir Waterfalls



Activists from Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club, River Runners for Wilderness, Living Rivers and Colorado Plateau River Guides during the Bureau of Reclamation's centennial celebration in June, 2002.

# The Confluence

...wants to be the quarterly journal of Colorado Plateau River Guides. CPRG has a fiscal sponsor, Living Rivers, a 501(c)(3) river advocacy organization that promotes river restoration.

## CPRG is dedicated to:

- Protecting and restoring the rivers of the Colorado Plateau
- Setting the highest standards for the river guiding profession
- Providing the best possible river experience
- Celebrating the unique spirit of the river community

**Guide Membership** is open to anyone who works, or has worked, in the river industry of the Colorado Plateau

**General Membership** is open to those who love the Colorado Plateau

**Membership dues**  
\$20 per year  
\$100 for six years  
\$295 for life  
\$495 as a benefactor

**General meetings and board meetings**  
**will be announced**

## Officers

President	Daniel Phillips
Vice-President	Mark Sundeen
Secretary/Treasurer	John Weisheit
Past President	Annie Payne

## Directors

Bluff	Vacant
Grand Junction	Marty Shelp
Green River	Vacant
Moab	Michael Smith
Vernal	Herm Hoops
UGO Rep	Lars Haarr

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We need opinions, articles, poetry, artwork, and photos. Please include graphics with your text submission.

**Editor this issue** John Weisheit  
**Printing** Times-Independent

ISSN: #1078-425X

**Note:** due to a temporary shortage of kenaf paper, this issue is printed on recycled paper

**Disclaimer:** The opinions and statements made within the pages of *The Confluence* are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the position of the guide membership, the board of the Colorado Plateau River Guides, nor our fiscal sponsor. If you have an opposing or supportive viewpoint, please send your comments for publication.

**CPRG River Education for 2004:** Call CPRG for information and register with your employer.

Cataract Canyon, April 26-29  
Westwater Canyon, April 26-27  
River Education Seminar, April 23-25  
Uinta Basin Training Seminar, May 27

**A Special Thanks to 2003 Donors:** CPRG would like to give thanks to those who provided generous financial support for our River Education Seminar (RES), which includes the National Park Service, Southeast Utah Group; Utah Guides and Outfitters; Utah State Parks and Recreation; and the Headwaters Institute.

**A Special Thanks to 2003 Instructors, Volunteers and Logistical Providers:** Rimrock Adventures, Holiday River Expeditions, Sheri Griffith Expeditions, Utah State Parks and Recreation, BLM Price Field Office, BLM Moab Field Office, BLM Grand Junction Office, Canyonlands National Park, US Geological Survey, Jack Schmidt, Roy Webb, Sue Phillips, Steve Young, George Simmons, Ian Torrance, Brad Dimock, Donald Baars, Mike Berry, Sera Janson, Dave Dawson, Steve Anderson, Michael Smith, Herm Hoops, John Weisheit and Annie Payne.

**CPRG Web Page:** CPRG now has a web page. Very soon our past issues will be archived on the web. Visit our web page at: [www.riverguides.org](http://www.riverguides.org).

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!** All general memberships to CPRG have been freely extended for one year because no issue of *The Confluence* was produced for 2003. In the past, volunteer members of CPRG have stepped in to help produce *The Confluence*, but these volunteers have since become quite busy with worthwhile endeavors. These volunteers were Michele Hill, Dave Focardi and John Weisheit. CPRG would like to thank Michele, Dave and John for stepping in to fulfill CPRG's journal responsibilities to its members. CPRG urgently needs a volunteer to assemble this journal. Please seriously consider this excellent opportunity to serve the guiding community. Contact information is provided in the column to the left. In the meantime, *The Confluence* will continue forward as best as it can. Thank you for your patience and understanding!

**CPRG 2004 General Membership Meeting:** please read "The Prez Sezs" in the following column for details.





# The Prez Sezs

by Dano Phillips

Happy New Year! I greet you all as the new president of CPRG. I'm excited about this position because I have wanted to be more involved. Involvement is the foundation for our small-but-active organization, and I've decided that this is my "platform". So I invite the 300+ membership to get more involved with article writing, meeting attendance, volunteer time, and all else. We can have a much stronger and more effective voice than we now do.

On a personal note, I was in the Northwest from September 2002 until this past June, studying the process of building wooden boats by traditional methods. It was a fun and interesting course, and out of it I achieved an Associates Degree. We built several boats from the backbone up, and did some repair and restoration. I would like to talk to any and all of you out there who have had experience building boats, for in the near future I want to build myself a dory. And it would be just great to chat about boats in their many forms, with their many challenges.

The board has some new and existing issues to tell you about, and since you haven't heard from us in a while, it is time to get you updated. First of all, **CPRG will be having a general membership meeting during the annual UGO Trade Show, which will happen from the 10th to the 12th of February in Bluff, UT.** We'll have a preliminary get-together on the 10th at 4:30pm, to let everyone know the topics up for discussion, and then a full meeting on the 11th during Red Olerich's talk.

During that meeting, we will be asking the membership to list some priorities they'd like to see CPRG address. If anyone has a pressing issue to discuss, I urge you to attend the meeting. We'll also be attempting to come up with area directors for Green River, Grand Junction, and the Bluff area, and discussing the possibility of a Salt Lake City director.

Another exciting topic is the possibility of a real, week-end-long river festival in 2004. We would try to get all or many of the annual events to happen that weekend in Moab, including demo days to gear reps and the ever popular Boatman's Bash.

*The Confluence* needs submissions; essays, photos, poetry, stories, and whatever else. One reason why it is overdue is because we lack material. We need more participation to make it a true quarterly.

That goes for all of CPRG, in fact. If you love *The Confluence*, the annual interpretive trips, and the River Education Seminars, please assist me with them. Trip leaders are needed for the existing Westwater (April 26-27) and Cataract (April 26-29) trips, and interpreters for these and the land-based R.E.S. If anyone is interested in a San Juan interp trip, I need help getting that together, too. It's up to all of us to make this stuff happen.

Thanks to everyone who attended and helped with July's Boatman Bash. We collected many new memberships, got several renewals, and the raffle was successful because of the resplendent generosity of businesses. I'd say that we all had a helluva good time! Next year we need

to find a place where we won't have to worry about the noise ordinance. Any good ideas? Thanks especially to DJ Bob Fries for keeping us groovin'. And thanks also to Red Bull for supplying us mixers, and to Sally Satterfield who poured. Everyone's help was really appreciated. I thought it was special that Kent Frost hung out for so long, and spoke a little. Thanks are also due to Annie Payne, John Weisheit, Ariana Lowe the organizer, Roy Webb for his Glen Canyon slide show, and Brian "Monkey" Stepek for letting us party at the OARS warehouse.

Hope the holidays were great for all of you. Contact me at <blueinaboat@yahoo.com> or P.O. Box 895; Moab, UT 84532, and we will get things rolling.

## CPRG Director Responsibilities

courtesy of Herm Hoops

- Attend CPRG board and member meetings.
- Coordinate or support river education programs.
- Represent CPRG with area river management agencies.
- Keep guides aware of area opportunities, issues and concerns.
- Appraise CPRG of area guide, outfitter, business and agency concerns.
- Keep aware of area river issues and concerns; propose responses to those concerns and secure CPRG approval to take actions.
- Maintain records of the above activities.
- Write articles for *The Confluence*.
- Participate in UGO, America Outdoors and other river-related professional organizational activities.

## Who Are Those Guys?

**President: Dano Phillips** was elected as the new president of CPRG in March of 2003, and assumed the duties in July after returning from school in Washington. He attended the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding in Port Townsend, WA, and came away with an associates degree in Traditional Wooden Boatbuilding after a nine-month course. He hopes to build a dory for himself employing traditional methods, and then avoid rocks with it for years to come. Dano has been guiding in Moab for the past 10 years, and has also guided Dinosaur and in Texas' Big Bend country, where he became a member of the Texas Pack Animal Association the hard way. He's attempting to get his little cow dog as accustomed to the water as he is.

**Past President: Annie Tueller-Payne** has been guiding rivers for 13 years throughout Colorado, Idaho, Arizona and Utah and she calls Cataract Canyon her "home river". She claims that she will run any type of boat anytime, but she must confess her favorite boat is a motor rig. After serving two terms as the President of CPRG, she is currently serving on the board as the Past President. Annie is committed to the preservation and restoration of the Colo-

rado River. While guiding river trips she not only focuses her efforts toward educating her guests about the flora and fauna of the area, she also try's to show the ramifications of Glen Canyon dam on the river. While not on the river, Annie works on a commercial fishing boat in the Prince William Sound of Alaska. She also works as the administrative coordinator for the Utah Guides and Outfitters. She enjoys sailing, boating and skiing. Annie lives in Salt Lake City, Utah with her husband Tim.

**Vice-President: Mark Sundeen** is temporarily working in Vermont at the campaign headquarters of presidential candidate Howard Dean. Mark comes from California and is the author of *Car Camping*, *The Making of Toro: Bullfights, Broken Hearts and One Author's Quest for the Acclaim He Deserves*. He is also the co-founder of a magazine called *Great God Pan*. When he is not writing, Mark pops up on the river scene as an instructor for Colorado Outward Bound School.

**Secretary/Treasurer: John Weisheit** was conceived on the Colorado River during a drought, which may explain his love for really low water. A former Colorado River weekend warrior from Los Angeles, and later Phoenix, he soon became bored with reservoir-related activities and started running the rivers above Glen Canyon Dam in 1980. Following the advice of professional boaters, usually while scouting major rapids and later flipping



his boat back over, he decided to become a commercial river guide. A career in the Grand Canyon did not appeal to John because he considers any trip below Glen Canyon Dam to be a funeral procession, so he moved to Moab in 1987.

A book about Canyonlands, the one he has been talking about for 12 years, will actually debut in April, 2004. Many of us were beginning to wonder if it would ever show up in a bookstore. While doing his 250th trip across the stagnant, stinky, mud-choked and weed-infested Reservoir Foul, he decided to become a full-time river activist. Some people find it very odd that John would willingly take on such abuse to earn even less money. On the other hand, John is wondering why it took so long to make the change. People from other parts of the country took notice of his dedication to river restoration and designated him as the official Colorado Riverkeeper in October of 2002.

Tired of repairs, grease, gasoline, smoke, alienation, noise, and frequent sightings of middle fingers, John decided that having motors in qualifying wilderness areas is really silly. It is also rumored that he periodically wears animal and boat costumes at public meetings and demonstrations to promote the restoration of our river's natural heritage. John says he will sleep when he is dead, or when the river flows freely to the Gulf of California, which ever comes first.



**Vernal Director: Herm Hoops** is not a man you can overlook easily. With concentrating, deep-set eyes framed by one long eyebrow and a rangy beard, he is a man of intensity. His gaze can be as soft as a warm summer breeze or as steely as cold wire. At age 58 one look will tell you there are still a lot of volts going through those wires.

Herm was born into a world dominated by covalent, non-polar, non-linear bond molecules. His life has been surrounded, and at times obsessed by the influence of water. It has brought him unimaginable joy and indescribable sorrow. The Rivers have been good to him, and he only hopes that he is repaying the favor.

**Moab Director: Michael Smith** has been a CPRG board member for both Bluff and Moab for the last two years. He is a lifetime member of Grand Canyon River Guides

and was one of CPRG's first lifetime members. He has been boating on the rivers of the Colorado Plateau both privately and professionally since 1976. He has earned an Associate Degree in Outdoor Education from Colorado Mountain College and a Bachelors Degree from Prescott College in Outdoor Recreation/Resource Management. Michael is currently the Program Manager for the Sand Flats Recreation Area and is the President and Founder of Plateau Restoration/Conservation Adventures.



**CPRG/UGO Liaison: Lars Haarr** fills this position that was created by CPRG to ensure communication between CPRG and Utah Guides and Outfitters. Lars was born and raised in northwest Montana. He took his first raft trip on the lower Salmon River when he was six years old, and in subsequent summers a profound love of flowing water developed. At age 20, after a poorly spent year and a half trying to figure out what he wanted to be when he grew up, a position opened up at a raft company in West Glacier, Montana, and the rest is history. He spent two seasons on the middle fork of the Flathead River, then moved to Big Sky, Montana and spent two seasons on the Madison and Gallatin rivers before moving to Moab. He has been a guide for OARS there for the last five years, running the canyons of Cataract, San Juan, Yampa and Lodore.

# Comments on the Issue of Motors

by Paul R. "Pops" Smith

I guess my conclusion based on what I have read in *The Confluence* and elsewhere is that the potential position of the CPRG is to advocate for a ban on motor use on our river craft. I also understand there is some dissent to that position within the organization. I should hope so! [See *The Confluence*, Issue 26]

What are the key impacts of a motor on a river craft from my point of view?

It will pollute the water. This is true! The recreational boat and jet ski usage on Lake Powell, however, is equivalent to an Exxon oil spill every two and a half years. Compared to that, the contribution by our few motors is less than a drop in the bucket, by a long shot!

It has the potential to aggravate others and affect the "wilderness experience" if the right is abused. Also true! Thus it is imperative we use proper etiquette when running a motor such as wakeless speed around other craft, minimize noise, etc. Some of the newer motors are very quiet and relatively clean.

A motor provides a way to get to help fast if there is a health or injury problem. Yes it does! Thankfully in my experience, I have not had to rush downriver with any of my customers, but I have provided that service to others who were in a bad fix. In one case I think a life was saved.

A motor provides a way to continue to progress downstream in adverse weather conditions or in low current conditions, thus shortening trips. It also allows us to motor out at the end of trips, as is necessary on Lake Powell and in certain circumstances on Lake Mead. Typical five to six day trips by conventional means can be done in three and in some cases two days with motor power. Perhaps this is merely convenience but I believe it may also be our survival.

Given my druthers, I very much prefer a six or seven day trip down Desolation Canyon or down Cataract from either Mineral Bottom or from Potash. Also my preference is to take 18 or 20 days or even more through the Grand Canyon. Slow and easy with a couple of relaxing layovers is the best way to go by far. Whenever I can, that is what I do on a private basis. After all I am retired, aren't I? I do however bring a motor along and use it in when necessary to overcome some of my "ambulatory" issues due to being older than dirt. My motor allows me to continue to ply these rivers independently as a private boater even though I have physical restrictions that prohibit the more strenuous activity of commercial guiding. When private boating, I do have the option to use or not to use a motor and I exercise it. Realistically, do we as an organization have that option? It depends on how we view and define the statement, whereby we profess to be dedicated toward "Protecting and restoring the rivers of the Colorado Plateau."

One aspect of protection is to try to return to the past. I would love to experience the wild river like Fremont et. al. Will I ever? No way! The damage has been done! Now the effort, rightfully so, must be to undo and repair the damage (Damn Dams!). How do we do that? One way is to make sure the companies that employ us are and remain viable,

so they will keep employing us. Elimination of motors where they are currently allowed would be a blow to some of those companies. Through hands on experience I know for a fact, that five, six and seven day Cat's do not sell as well as the shorter motor supported runs of three and sometimes two days. The same goes for shorter rather than longer Desolation Canyon trips. Even one day makes a difference in the salability of a trip. Three day and four day Lodore Canyon trips, presented side by side in the same brochure, always sell out first toward the three-day trip. It is often a scramble to get to financial break-even on the longer trips and often we have to operate at a loss just to preserve credibility. As a guide I try to find out from the customers why these facts are true. Inevitably I get the same feedback. People can get away for a few days, but for most more isn't possible. I would conclude the same goes for the Grand Canyon experience. Have you ever tried to fill a sixteen or eighteen day private trip up to the allowed maximum? Why do you think the usage percentage compared to what is allowed is so low on these private trips? It isn't lack of money nor is it lack of desire. It is lack of time! If the only commercial option in the Grand Canyon was two weeks or more, most of us would be unemployed on the river and working in some damned city to make ends meet! If the only options on the Upper Plateau were five or six days on Deso or Cat, I propose the same would happen. What would CPRG look like then? Would it be around at all? How much influence would it have? Who would be around to fight for the removal of the Damn Dams?

When we suggest as an organization that we are dedicated toward "Providing the best possible river experience" the question that comes to my mind is from whose point of view? To a busload of "seventy-some-things" is a six day trip or even a three day trip down through the Big Drops in August at 105 degrees the best experience, or rather a quick half-day trip in a breezy jet boat? To a really busy executive or broker or politician, is only three days away from the sharks better than five? It damn well was when I was in that realm. To me it sometimes looked like the difference between success and survival in my chosen career.

Getting back to protecting and restoring the river, lets talk about influence for a while. In our free society, how do you influence those that can do something about the things we advocate as an organization? How do we eliminate the evil blockages to our free-running rivers, the really big problem? We must do it by educating the public to what is happening. Droughts are not fun but they are a fact of life. We right now and for the foreseeable future have a great opportunity to maximize the effect of our position related to decommissioning dams by showing the maximum number of participants what we have been talking about since the late fifties when this war began. Rather than sounding like a bunch of tree-hugging "doomsdayers", we can show people the early signs of doomsday at the outlet of the San Juan and the outlet of the Colorado into Lake Powell. There is nothing like giving a "mover and shaker" from the big city a quick but informative look at still reasonably pristine river, within his or her time frame, then



having that person help you drag your boat across a sea of mud where a lake is supposed to be, or wade across a mud flat to get to a place to camp or hike. If you have done your job of pointing out the glory of the river as well as logically and reasonably presenting our position while upstream, then you show them the mess downstream you will have an impact. Let them wade through it, and smell it and see the trash then in your farewell talk, ask them to do something about it. That's how our system works. Only when the power brokers in Washington hear about something from a lot of constituents do they pay any attention. If we eliminate the busy people from the river experience, those who tend to get things done once persuaded; as well as the elderly, who have the time and money to be proactive we should be considered pretty stupid. These are the two most politically active sectors of our public and in my opinion; to hinder their participation destines us to lose the war. Prohibiting motors and lengthening future trips is a step backwards and will guarantee us losing our already precarious position of influence.

How about the politically active aspect? I don't care if you are Democrat or Republican or Independent or Libertarian or whatever; political party isn't an issue. Political activism is! How many of you have written to your Representatives or to your Senators and pitched our position on decommissioning those dams that affect our situation? Have you done it repeatedly and enlisted friends and family and acquaintances to do it too, repeatedly? How many of you have promoted to your employer to allow you to invite one of these power brokers on a trip, and then made the offer? This is another way our system works. Only if they hear from people, or even better if they are offered a freebie and told it'll only take three days, will the message be heard? Remember back in the 60's, when the plan for several dams flooding the Grand Canyon was revived? Regardless of all of the efforts to the contrary by the Sierra Club and other organizations trying to protect the Canyon it looked like a done deal. Only after one of the strongest proponents of more dams, Stewart Udall then Secretary of Interior, took a trip through the Grand Canyon and was influenced by the professionalism and the logic of what he saw and heard did the threat go away again. He went back to Washington and killed all of the then current legislation. That's the way it works folks! We can spend our energy helping these people to become informed, or we can spend it providing ways to prohibit them from finding out what is needed. I propose that motors on our rivers play a part in that. We may stand around and wring our hands and bemoan the state of the Grand Canyon and other sections of rivers we are more familiar with, but it is far better as it is than if it were under several hundred feet of water. Let me assure you, motors on our river craft are the lesser of several evils. To eliminate them would in my view reduce our ability to win the war. Let us put everything into winning that war first, even if the use of these disagreeable motors is one of the weapons in our arsenal. Then after the war is won we can do something about the several lesser evils we have had to maintain to get the job done. Let's not try to eat the whole apple in one

bite! We can shoot ourselves in the foot later when we have the luxury, rather than now when the battle is fully engaged.

Once Flaming Gorge Dam and Navajo and Glen Canyon and Hoover are being decommissioned, then I'll toss my little motor on the funeral pyre, wherever you build it, and join all of you in a nice summer float for a month or three throughout the whole deal.

Quite a dream isn't it! Will anybody help me row? For now anyway, that's my story an' ah'm stickin' to it. Don't let the b@\$^@rds git ya!

## Me and That Lake

by Paul R. "Pops" Smith

I never did see the Canyon called Glen,  
T'was there 'fore Lake Powell was made.  
There are books and slides of how it was then,  
Sheer walls, cool glens, and afternoon shade.

A bold youth was I in a shiny new boat,  
Exploring and skiing this great new lake.  
And beneath a bright moon I'd stop and float,  
All these glories were mine to partake.

I reveled in exotic names and places,  
Escalante, San Juan, Music Temple, Slickrock.  
Skiing on glass, I put my boat through its paces,  
Awed by Mormon guts at "Hole in the Rock".

I first saw the lake very early in the filling,  
Cliffs and sheer walls, desert varnish, far and near.  
Rainbow Bridge an hour hike for the few willing,  
"Fern Grotto" on the way, respite from desert sear.

Next year "Fern Grotto" was engulfed for good,  
A quick pause for mourning deemed to be enough.  
Way up Rainbow Canyon a Marina now stood,  
I shrugged with indifference, "Gee, that's tough."

Then I found the Ancient's Pictograph Cave,  
Past Lagorce Arch in the Gulch called Davis.  
A friend named Jack did humorously rave,  
At the comic message he felt they'd left us.

It seemed to me the site should be sacred,  
It's stayed on my mind for many years.  
Next time I visited the cave was inundated,  
It was wrong and awakened repressed fears.

How come now I can boat up under Rainbow?  
I thought they'd promised no water this far back!  
Whoa, too much! Who messed up, do you know?  
Is my apathy the culprit? Who can I attack?

But back in my reality, premonitions flew away.  
Good intentions gone in the pressure cooker race,  
Up the corporate ladder, compete to win my way,  
Survival is the mode, as I seek my rightful place.

Years later a man returned, perhaps a little wiser,  
'Twas full to the brim when I'd left before.  
Now the water marks beautiful walls,  
A hideous white ring that cuts to my core.

Oil slicks and trash; greasy, muddy beaches,  
Sights and sounds and smells to abhor.  
Thousands of people, boats up serene reaches,  
Magnificence and splendor, gone forevermore.

I'd heard dire predictions, tailings, toxins galore,  
Seepage and evaporation a major shortfall.  
Endangered fish too few to replenish anymore,  
San Juan branch a mud flat from wall to wall.

These, plus everywhere, defiled and stained walls,  
And human waste on beaches the lake around,  
It became a "no brainer", one of those easy calls,  
Drain the lake, do it now, so it'll rebound!

I know it's a "pipe dream", too much money there,  
And too few believers to win this "Holy War".  
Prophecies are coming true, now I'm aware,  
And at Gypsum Canyon the lake's a mud bar.

It took me decades to leave the users,  
And join the few vying to see it drained.  
If I let it fill with silt, I'll join the abusers.  
That's an evil specter! I'm deeply pained!

Last week I ran the river, Mineral Bottom to Hite,  
Way below the "Big Drops", mud stuck our boat.  
Through Narrow Canyon a very sorrowful sight,  
Only a third of the lake left, a skinny slimy moat.

The stained walls are still there, but also I see,  
Silt bars, poison ivy, tamarisk and tumbleweeds.  
At Mille Crag Bend where Sheep Canyon was,  
Is an ugly mud plain as the lake still recedes.

The center buoy there is nearly on the beach,  
Both Dark and Rock Canyons are high and dry.  
Deep mud along the water, dry sand out of reach,  
The sights in this Canyon leave the urge to cry.

We motored till dusk looking for a usable spot,  
To no avail till we reached Hite Marina.  
But even here bare rock is silted a lot,  
Full of trash and other paraphernalia.

I took this all in and it made my heart sore,  
I know others down the lake don't ever see this.  
But even if, they'd be indifferent, I was before!  
Now I'll advocate drainage, I won't be remiss.

A friend named Tim takes the long view,  
Natural plugs backed lakes thrice this size.  
And nature is relentless, that is nothing new,  
All filled and breached, destruction their demise.

Today's tiny blockage will follow the same trend,  
True, I won't see it fail while I am still alive.  
But if predictions are true, it will see its end,  
In just a few generations, as few as five.

No, not in my lifetime, nor that of my boys,  
But my hope and prayer will always be.  
Our grandchild's grandchild on his grown up toys,  
Will float a Glen Canyon once more set free.

# From the Marriott Library

## FILM EVENT

The Special Collections Department of the University of Utah's J. Willard Marriott Library has been collecting historical films that depict Glen Canyon for quite a few years now, and we want to show them off! On Tuesday, April 13, the University will host an all day showing of a number of films from our collections. Both professional and home color movies will be shown that will give you a chance to see what it was like to leave from the Hite Ferry; to float past Tapestry Wall; to sit in Music Temple; and to hike to Rainbow Bridge. An added feature will be films of the canyons of the upper Green that are now flooded by Flaming Gorge Dam. The festival will start at 12:00 PM on Tuesday, April 13, and run until 8:00 PM. The films will be shown in the Marriott Library's Gould Auditorium. For more information, call Roy Webb, Multimedia Archivist, at (801) 585-3073, or email at <roy.webb@library.utah.edu>.

## RIVER HISTORY AVAILABLE ONLINE AT MARRIOTT LIBRARY WEBSITE

Ever seen a one of the registers that used to be in Music Temple? How about a page from an original diary kept by pioneer river runner Nathaniel Galloway in 1909? What about photos from Harold Leich's solo run from the source of the Colorado through Westwater in 1933? Or how about photos from Glen Canyon and Flaming Gorge before the dams? You can find all of these and more at the University of Utah's J. Willard Marriott Library website. The URL is <http://www.lib.utah.edu/spc/photo>. Once there, use the various indexes to look for photos. You can search for photos by using the Alphabetical Index, for instance, or use the Subject Index and look under Rivers and Lakes. You can also use the search engine by putting in a term such as "Glen" or "river". The search engine searches across collections, however, so you might get a picture of the Green in Desolation Canyon and next find one of a dog sled on the Wood River in Idaho. So when you're not able to surf your favorite wave, get on the internet and surf over to some cool historical sources on river running.

### **Free Replacement if Lost or Stolen**

*It takes  
a certain amount of blue  
to be a sky  
and a unique collection  
of upwardly motivated stars*

*It takes  
a winter of snow  
to be a river  
and an order of stones  
to punctuate life's  
sentimental journeys*

*It takes  
an abundance of green  
to be a forest  
and a little bit of whimsy  
to paint enough  
wildflowers*

*It takes  
a certain amount of love  
woven red with courage  
to trust  
another human being  
with your heart*

**Doub Oblak**



# On Any Given Day...

## Cataract Canyon Flash Flood

by Stephen Anderson

On 2 August 2001, I departed Potash boat ramp on a six-day commercial solo boat Cataract Canyon rafting trip for Tag-A-Long Expeditions. This was to be my twenty-ninth trip down Cataract. My passengers were a jovial French couple, who were on a typical five-week vacation of the western United States.

The trip was going along as normal for the first few days as we silently rowed down the scenic Colorado River taking in the sights and enjoying peace and quiet. This was a rare pleasure especially for me. I had spent the last two seasons running snout rigs through the canyon and had become accustomed to the constant hum of the motor. This indeed was a welcome change.

By early the fourth day we had reached the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers, and after a brief stop for lunch we registered for our camps within the walls of Cataract. By 3 p.m. we were at rapid number ten and one of my customers, Yve, was complaining of "feeling ill" and wanted to make camp for the night at a shaded site. I had signed us in at lower Capsize on river left, but because I knew there was only late shade there and Yve was probably suffering from dehydration and fatigue from the heat, I made the decision to stop above Mile Long on river right about a half mile above Range Canyon.

Upon eddying out I walked over the camp area to insure that it was a safe and comfortable spot for the night. We set up the tents and the kitchen along the sandy bank and Yve and his wife took a nap while I prepared dinner. At this point the sky was clear and the weather seemed favorable. By nine o'clock that night, my customers had retired to their tent, and I sat up reading until the sunset and the stars were shining. I remember thinking that since the weather was good I would sleep outside. I put my Paco Pad and sleeping bag in front of a house-size boulder that sat in the middle of our camp, and by 11 p.m. or so, I was sound asleep.

Sometime around midnight I was awakened by an earth shattering crash that I thought was probably thunder. I looked up at the night sky expecting to see rain clouds but saw only stars. I stood up to investigate a possible rock fall, but was instantly swept to my knees by a rush of icy water and debris. Immediately, I was swept thirty or so feet toward the Colorado River. I was fortunate enough to be slammed against a large boulder that had been unearthed by the sudden discharge of water. I was able to climb hands and feet over to safety and to the tent of my customers. My eyes, ears, nose, and mouth were full of sand and I was in a slight state of shock from what had just occurred. It was at this point that I realized that a flash flood was tearing through the camp. The earth-shattering crash that I had heard only seconds before was the raging water and accompanying debris falling a thousand feet or

so over the sandstone cliffs of the canyon's walls.

I remember the mad rush of adrenaline that was surging through my body and the slight sense of panic that was battling inside my mind. I immediately got to my feet and rushed to the tent where my unsuspecting customers were still asleep. The water was still raging throughout the camp and spreading out toward their tent. I shook their tent and was yelling "flash flood, get out of the tent." Startled and still groggy, they didn't seem to realize the events going on only a few feet away. I began to pull their tent to higher ground with them still inside. The water was now pouring into the tent and they began to panic slightly. I helped them out of the tent and moved them to safety.

I went back and pulled their tent out of the eddy of the river, it was then that I looked up and saw that the 17-foot raft that we had traveled so calmly down the river was now drifting downstream. The raft and kitchen were directly downstream of where I was, but the problem was that there was a forty-foot wide flash flood between the boat and me. For a moment I thought about trying to cross the flood and diving in the river to swim after the drifting raft, but then realized that the oars were on shore, my PFD was on the boat, and I was above the rapids of Mile Long. Good sense took over and I chose otherwise.

I went back to comfort and reassure my customers that all would be okay and that they were now safe. The flood was still growing and the icy water now washed most of the camp, including the entire kitchen area, away. I have little recollection of how much time had passed by at this point, it could have been hours, but it seemed like only minutes. After returning to the care of my customers and helping them get resettled for the night, I made several attempts to cross the flood channel and try to salvage any remaining gear. I was continuously swept downstream or flung against exposed rocks. I knew there was nothing that I could do at this point but wait for the steady stream of water to subside. I sat down and took a few minutes to collect my thoughts. I had heard stories of flash floods from my brother Daniel and from other guides, but I didn't expect to experience it myself. I felt helpless with the situation and somehow responsible for the flood.

I made regular trips to check on my customers, who weren't in any hurry to go back to sleep, and tried to make them as comfortable as possible. After a few hours passed, I was able to crawl across the flood channel and search for lost equipment. I walked barefooted down to Range Canyon, but was unable to locate the raft or anything else for that matter. I headed back to where our camp once stood, checked in on my customers and tried to sleep. It was now four in the morning and the flood channel was still roaring through the center of our camp. All of my personal sleeping gear and my Chacos were swept away with the initial blast of water, so I lay down on a flat rock and waited for morning.

I slept like hell for those few hours and woke to what resembled a war zone. The soft sandy beach that we had lounged on only hours ago was now an eight foot deep, forty foot wide muddy ditch. As expected, spirits were down

and Yve and his wife were a bit shaken up from the night's experience. I explained to them how our motor support was coming down during the day and that we would have to link up with them. I assessed the camp area and was able to recover a Roll-a-Table and some kitchen equipment from the downstream eddy. I walked the riverbank and found my poco pad and sleeping bag stuck in a strainer that probably came down with the flood the night before. After returning to camp, I conducted an inventory of what was lost. All of the personal items belonging to Yve and his wife, with the exception of what they were wearing to bed, were now gone along with the raft and all of the kitchen gear, as well as my own personal gear. To make matters worse all of the food and water was either washed into the river or was aboard the missing raft. Things only seemed to be getting worse. It was around eight that morning when we decided to just sit down and enjoy the view and the fact that no one was hurt or killed.

Around 11 a.m. the first outside contact arrived as Colorado Outward Bound School was coming down stream with several boats full of students. They pulled in to lend a hand and gave us their last jerry can of fresh water and some food to hold us over until our motor support arrived. I asked them to keep an eye out for our equipment and to tie up the boat if they came across it. By noon, Joe Oneilson from OARS came by with a snout rig and also stopped to make sure that we were all okay. Joe let me use his satellite phone to call Tag-A-Long and the Park Service office to report the flood. Joe offered to motor us out, but I declined, telling him that help was on the way. I also asked him to also keep an eye out for our gear along the way.

The day was getting longer and by four, we were wondering what happened to our motor support boats. It turned out the Tag had three trips that had all linked up and decided to run the canyon together. By five help had arrived. The looks on their faces said it all. Bob Jones motored in and the first question was "is everyone safe". These words were music to my ears. He was more concerned with the safety of the people and didn't mention the thousands of dollars worth of gear that was sacrificed to the river gods. After a short exchange of greetings we loaded up what little we had left and headed downstream. We found the missing raft that COBS had tied up for us at rapid nineteen, but my personal rocket box and a 128 quart cooler was missing, most likely thrown from the unmanned boat as it plunged through the rapids. We rolled the raft and headed out to set up camp below Ten Cent Rapid. I considered myself lucky that we had several snout rigs, piloted by experienced guides coming down with Bob. Everyone banded together to help and comfort my passengers and myself. After the work was done for the night we settled in for a much-needed rest.

The next day we set out for Hite and the trip home. My passengers and I left with Mark Murray and his boatload of people. We arrived at Hite without any problems and the rest of the combined group came in later. I was able to fly back to Moab with my customers and was finally able to relax a little. The reality of the flash flood hadn't

quite settled in yet, but I was relieved to be off the river.

I arrived back at the Tag-A-Long office, unloaded my personal gear, and headed straight for the Moab Brewery to drown my sorrows and make a real effort to forget about this disastrous trip. After a few pitchers of the brewery's finest beer, I retreated to the SPLORE house and hung out with some friends. While I was there Mark Murray called the house to tell me that Joe Oneilson had found my personal rocket box and my passengers' dry bags floating below the Big Drops. I picked up the lost gear and found that despite a few big dents in my rocket box, all of my gear was dry and accounted for. I can't begin to tell you what a relief came over me. Joe also dropped off the dry bags to the Tag-A-Long office and much to the delight of Yve and his wife all of their personal belongings were also dry, including the one hundred and twenty rolls of undeveloped film they had taken over the past month. Fortune was shining on me now.

In the end, the only personal losses were my Chacos and my passengers' sandals. I haven't been back to Cataract since, but I do look forward to returning and making peace with the canyon and the Colorado River once again. Because the weather was clear in my immediate vicinity, it seems likely that the flood came from several miles away, as they often do. I don't feel that I could have done anything to prevent the events of that night, but hindsight is always twenty-twenty in these situations. If I had it all to do again, I would obviously camp in a different spot, but on the other hand, I was dealing with Mother Nature and we all know that She wins every time. This just goes to show that on any given day, things that we take for granted can erupt into disasters right before our eyes.

I would like to thank all of the people who assisted me that day, especially Bob Jones for his understanding and genuine concern for our safety, Cathy Burks, Susette Weisheit, Mark Murray, and Bart Harvey for their help and concern when they picked us up. Most important, I want to thank Joe Oneilson for the use of his satellite phone and for his help in recovering our lost gear and, last but not least, the COBS crew, Greg Bunn, Nicole Parentice, Bret Morton and Matt DiFransesca for the food and their last jerry can of fresh water that they so generously gave to us that morning. I had always believed that there was a strong camaraderie between boatmen. Having all of these people join together and help out in a time of need certainly reaffirmed that belief.

# Waterfall at Hite?

by John Weisheit

I attended the 2003 Science Symposium hosted by the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center in Tucson last October. I do not think there is a better educational venue available for a river guide and I highly recommend attending the next program when it becomes available. Outside of travel expenses, the symposium is free to the public. The proceedings from the symposium are now available on the web at <[www.gcmrc.gov](http://www.gcmrc.gov)>.

Of particular interest to Cataract Canyon guides was a presentation given by Bill Vernieu, a hydrologist for the USGS in Flagstaff. Bill introduced some compelling evidence that a waterfall could form over a bedrock feature downstream of the Dirty Devil River. Broken surface water is already indicating at the suspected contact point and, should the reservoir continue to drop, the proposed waterfall seems likely to develop. Should this event occur, it is hoped that a river access location can be determined by the National Park Service at Glen Canyon, otherwise access to downstream take-outs may require a portage of gear and equipment.

Bill was able to locate an aerial photograph of the area taken in 1973 during the reservoir's initial filling criteria, and with the reservoir level then nearly equivalent to the present reservoir level, which is basically 100 feet below the full pool elevation of 3700 feet.

Incidentally, a small waterfall has already emerged on the San Juan River. This waterfall is not at the same location as the waterfall that emerged on the San Juan River in 1991 during the drought of 1987–1992 (see the first issue of *The Confluence*, Winter 1993).

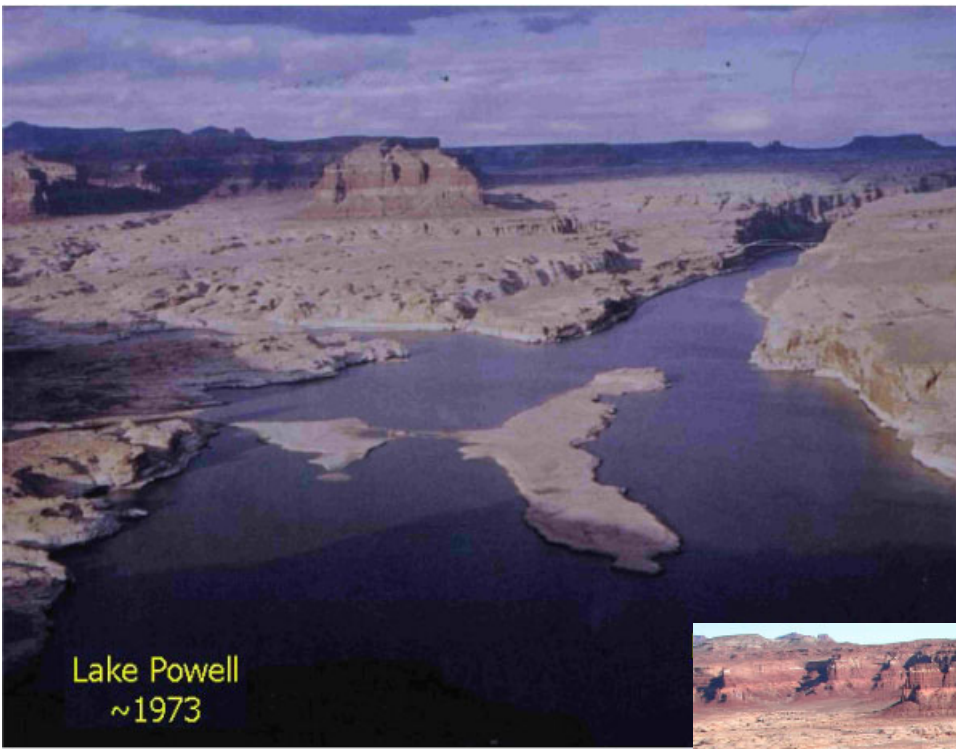
As an informational item, Hite Marina is officially closed and access there is currently impossible. Most river groups traveled over the reservoir to exit at Halls' Crossing or Bullfrog marinas. Others exited the reservoir from the mud flats

on the reservoir's west side near Highway 95, which is downstream of the proposed waterfall location.



The bedrock waterfall that emerged below Clay Hills Crossing during the drought of 1987 to 1992, and then subsequently inundated after the huge snowmelt of 1993. Photo courtesy of Gene Stevenson.





Lake Powell  
~1973

Left: Lake Powell just below the mouth of the Dirty Devil River in 1973 during the reservoir's filling criteria, which ended in 1980. This bedrock island is actually a cliff top of Cedar Mesa sandstone. The original Colorado River gorge is on the right, or east side of this photo. Photo courtesy of USGS.



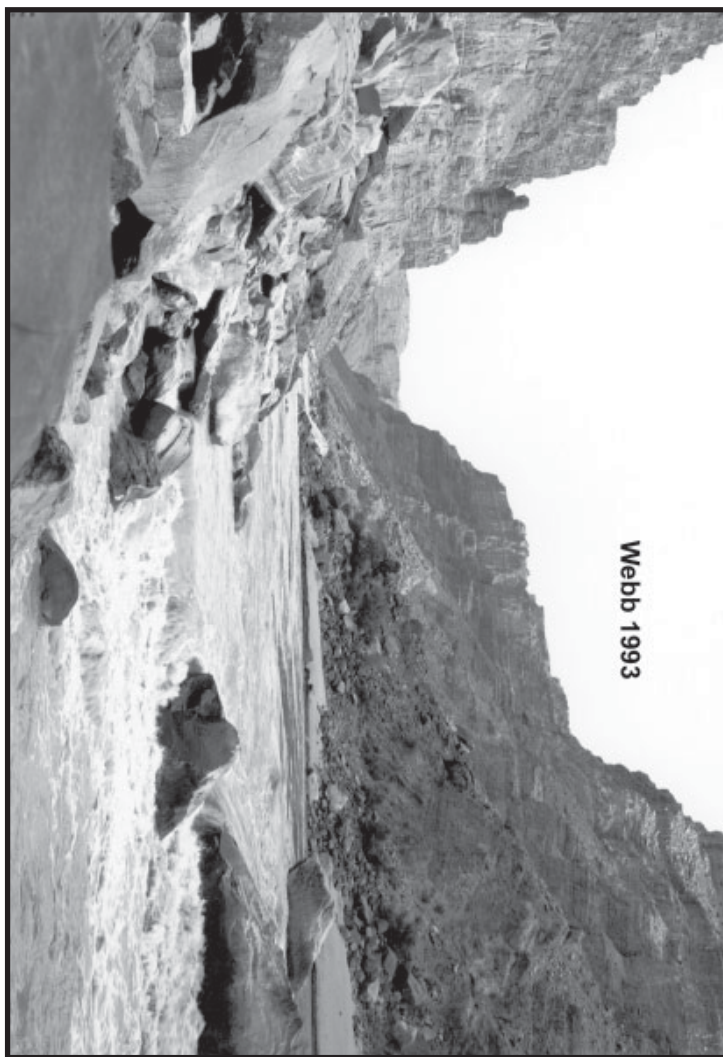
Right: John Dohrenwend, a retired USGS geomorphologist, took the image from 1973 and overlaid it onto a photo he took in 2003. Special thanks to the Moki Mac folks in Salt Lake City for this great idea.



The San Juan River meandering over sediment deposits where downcutting over a bedrock feature has created a new waterfall in 2003. Photo courtesy of USGS.



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Big Drop Two, river right and looking upstream. Robert Webb's repeat photography of a Kolb Brother's photo from 1911.

In April, 2004 University of Utah Press will release *Cataract Canyon: A Human and Environmental History of the Rivers in Canyonlands* by Robert H. Webb, Jayne Belnap and John Weisheit. This 480 page book will showcase the repeat photography of 80 historic images, and includes the interpretations of this compelling landscape from the perspectives of a geologist, a biologist and a river historian. The cloth bound edition is \$60 and the paper bound edition is \$26.95. Visit the University of Utah web page at <[www.upress.utah.edu](http://www.upress.utah.edu)> or contact them at 800.773.6672.