



# THE SPRAY

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COLORADO WHITEWATER ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 59, NUMBER 1, March/April 2012

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## CW Training Camp May 18-20

**\*EARLY SIGN-UP SPECIAL:**  
Register now through 3/18/12 and  
receive a \$30 discount!  
(See pages 14-15)

## New Class! Intro To Rafting (May 6, See Page 7)

## Check out CW's New website!

Two new forums!  
Feel free to post a question there and an ACA  
Instructor will reply.

[http://  
www.coloradowhitewater.org](http://www.coloradowhitewater.org)

COLORADO WHITEWATER  
455 Sherman Street, Suite 300  
Denver, CO 80203

[HTTP://WWW.COLORADOWHITEWATER.ORG](http://www.coloradowhitewater.org)

## Whitewater Rafting: Therapy for PTSD?

By Eric Newhouse (blogging for Psychology Today)

If my plastic brain (see my last two blogs) has been stamped with some ugly combat images, why not drop a couple of pleasant, high-adrenaline memories on top of the bad ones?

That's the premise that X Sports 4 Vets is based on, and the program based out of Missoula, Mont., seems to be helping a number of vets. It features riverboarding, rock climbing, sky diving, and other extreme sports. You can learn more about the program at <http://xsports4vets.org/>

One form of therapy is white-water rafting down the Lochsa River, a 20-mile stretch of wild and scenic river in eastern Idaho that boasts 25 class 3-4-and-5 rapids. I floated the Lochsa a few years ago, and it was a once-in-a-lifetime thrill for me.

"When I got out on the river, it was like team-building," says Brandon Bryant, an Air Force vet. "It was exciting without the inherent danger of going out in the field."

During five and a half years in the Air Force, Bryant fought the war from a cubicle in Las Vegas, where he was the co-pilot of a UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) Predator. "When we shot missiles, I was the one who guided them into the target," he told me.

But the first deaths he witnessed were American soldiers returning from a mission in Iraq just after dawn. "We saw something that looked like a buried IED (improvised explosive device) in the road, but we couldn't stop them. The first vehicle went over it. Then the second went over it. It exploded, and everyone died," he says. "I was 19 at the time and I felt guilty, as though I was responsible for the deaths of our military members. That's when I knew I would never be the same again."

In one sense, it was like being a bombardier in Vietnam. In another, it was a lot worse.

"We flew the Predator by satellite in Iraq and Afghanistan, gathering intelligence for a week or so unless our guys were under attack," he says. "Then we found out where the bad guys were shooting from, and we would drop bombs on them. I could see the aftermath of every strike."

When Bryant returned home, he was diagnosed with 100 percent PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). He carried a lot of guilt and a lot of anger at people who had little regard for their own lives or the lives of others. And he isolated himself from most civilians, including his own family, who couldn't understand what he'd been through.

That changed on the river.



Continued on page 10

## CW MISSION

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

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

## CW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONS?

To Join CW, visit our website at [www.coloradowhitewater.org](http://www.coloradowhitewater.org) and join online.

To change your e-mail or other contact information: Contact Helen Johnson at [hellionbiz@gmail.com](mailto:hellionbiz@gmail.com).

## 2012 Spray Submission Schedule

The Spray encourages article submissions on all whitewater related issues. Please send submissions to Scott Winkleman at [scott@coloradowhitewater.org](mailto:scott@coloradowhitewater.org).

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Submission Date</u>
May/June	May 1, 2012
July/Aug	July 1, 2012
Sept/Oct	September 1, 2012
Nov/Dec	November 1, 2012
Jan/Feb	January 1, 2013

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## Submissions

We welcome your contributions on topics related to whitewater paddling.

## Written Material

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

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

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

# Golden



# River Sports

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Golden, CO 80401  
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GoldenRiverSports.net

**We Have  
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We punched a hole in the wall and took over the space next door. Come explore our new kayaking side of the building which is a renovated and redesigned 1,400 square feet space dedicated officially to paddle sports! Or if fly fishing is your thing - we are still fully stocked! Half Fly Fishing / Half Kayaking! Lots of room for you to explore.



New gear is beginning to arrive in March so take this opportunity NOW for the last of our 2011 clearance and discounted items - up to 50% off!

- PFD's
- Paddles
- Skirts
- Booties
- Dry Pants
- Dry Tops
- Rash Guards
- Helmets
- Kayaks

**Spring Swap and Sale is coming  
April 20-22, 2012!**

**CW Members  
Always Receive  
a 15% Discount!**

Some restrictions apply  
See store for details.

# COLORADO WHITEWATER 2012 SPRING INSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Classes will be held at Meyers Pool, 7900 Carr Drive, Arvada (80<sup>th</sup> and Carr St.), unless otherwise indicated.  
There will be an \$9.00 pool entry fee.

## Open Pool

Simply come to the pool to practice and tune up for the upcoming season on your own without instruction. The pool will be open for kayaking practice from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Sundays, starting January 8, 2012 through May 6, 2012, except for February 19, March 4 & 11, and April 8 & 15, 2012.

**Cost:** \$9 pool entry fee.

## Just Starting Out (Beginner) Kayaking Classes

### Just Starting Out (Beginner) Kayaking Classes

Beginner classes provide instruction in a safe and comfortable pool environment. All classes are led by ACA-certified instructors. These classes are suitable for those who have never been in a kayak before. You will learn about boats, essential gear, basic paddle strokes, river safety, and we'll introduce you to the kayak roll. Once you've learned the basics in the pool, you can join your instructors for a weekend of intensive instruction on flat and moving water, May 12 & 13.

**Cost:** \$130 course fee plus pool admission for each pool session. Includes three 2-hour pool sessions, the flat-water/moving water weekend and rental equipment (boat, spray skirt, and paddle) for the three pool sessions.

#### Class One

Pool Sessions  
March 18, 25 and April 1  
all sessions 3:00 – 5:00 PM

#### Instructors:

Elizabeth Austen  
Sean Stevenson

#### Class Two

Pool Sessions  
April 22, 29 and May 6  
all sessions 1:00 – 3:00 PM

#### Instructors:

Dick Alweis  
Jenny McCurdy

#### Class Three

Pool Sessions  
April 22, 29 and May 6  
all sessions 3:00 – 5:00 PM

#### Instructors:

Pat Brown  
Peter Holcombe



May 12 & 13 will be flat water/moving water weekend for both classes.

## Beginning Roll Classes

Never tried to roll a kayak before? Tried but just didn't quite get it? Come learn the basic steps in mastering this essential white water kayaking skill. Learning to roll your boat upright will open the door to enjoying the rivers as opposed to being intimidated by them. Plus, learning in a safe and warm environment makes it all the more fun.

**Cost:** \$35 course fee plus pool admission. Includes one 2-hour session in the pool.

We suggest you provide your own equipment (boat, paddle, spray skirt).  
Boats, paddle and spray skirts will be available with request.

### Class One

Pool Session  
March 18, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

### Class Two

Pool Session  
March 25, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

### Class Three

Pool Session  
April 1, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

### Instructors:

Elizabeth Austen  
Sean Stevenson

### Instructors:

Elizabeth Austen  
Sean Stevenson

### Instructors:

Elizabeth Austen  
Sean Stevenson

## Roll Tune-Up Classes

This class is for kayakers who have learned and practiced the basics of the kayak roll, but would like help with technique and consistency.

**Cost:** \$35 course fee plus pool admission. Includes one 2-hour session in the pool.

We suggest you provide your own equipment (boat, paddle, spray skirt).  
Boats, paddle and spray skirts will be available with request.

### Class One

Pool Session  
March 25, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

### Instructors:

Mark Robbins

### Class Two

Pool Session  
May 6, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

### Instructors:

Pat Brown  
Peter Holcombe

## Hands Roll Classes

So you've been told that you don't need that paddle in order to roll. You've seen it done. You know that someday you'll find yourself upside down without your trusty paddle. Come learn the secret (they say there isn't one) to the no-paddle or hands roll.

**Cost:** \$35 course fee plus pool admission. Includes one 2-hour session in the pool.

We suggest you provide your own equipment (boat, paddle, spray skirt).  
Boats, paddle and spray skirts will be available with request.

### Class One

Pool Session  
March 18, 3:00 – 5:00 PM

### Instructors:

Steve Dougherty

## Basic Playboating

This class is for kayakers with dependable rolls who would like to begin to learn essential playboating skills. After learning moves in the pool, participants will get a chance to take these skills onto moving water. Participants should have intermediate ability and a solid roll.

**Cost:** \$65 course fee plus pool admission. Includes one 2-hour session in the pool and one session on moving water.

Participants should have their own equipment (playboat, paddle, spray skirt, helmet, PFD, etc.).

### Class One

Pool Session

April 29, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

### Instructors:

Peter Holcombe

Robert Baca

Moving water session will be scheduled with the class at the pool session.

## Playboating for a Solid Roll

Playing in holes on the river is one of the best ways to improve your roll. This class is for kayakers who would like to improve their roll by playing in holes. Basic playboating skills will be learned, but the emphasis will be on rolling. After practicing your roll and learning some playboating basics in the pool, participants will get a chance to take these skills into a hole at the play park.

**Cost:** \$65 course fee plus pool admission. Includes one 2-hour session in the pool and one session on moving water.

Participants should have their own equipment (playboat, paddle, spray skirt, helmet, PFD, etc.).

### Class One

Pool Session

April 22, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

### Instructors:

Peter Holcombe

Robert Baca

Moving water session will be scheduled with the class at the pool session.

## Whitewater Safety Class

Colorado Whitewater has arranged for ACA Swiftwater Rescue Clinic's for only \$150 this year which is over 33% off of list price! This clinic is for all Colorado Whitewater members who are kayakers, canoeist, rafters, duckie captains or just like splashing around in the river.

Somewhere, at sometime, you will wish you knew what to do in a river emergency. Just rescuing gear can turn into a nightmare, never mind rescuing a person. Quick response time and the knowledge to set up a rescue safely are skills you should have as a boater. Make this the year to bring your rescue skills to a higher level. Friends owe it to friends to be capable of river rescue. All rescue equipment is provided. Boating gear may be rented. Kayakers must be of Class II-III ability. Rescue lifejackets are considered personal equipment and are highly recommended. This clinic qualifies as an ACA sanction course.

The location of this class may vary greatly based on river levels and weather. The June class will probably run on the Platte River or Clear Creek near Denver. The Sept class will take place in conjunction with Colorado River weekend. We will contact you in advance to let you know the location we have chosen that is best for the class.

**Cost:** \$150

**Dates:** (Two Day Class – Time 8am-6pm each day)

June 16-17

Sept 7-9

## Intro To Rafting: Rig to Flip

This class is intended for anyone who would like to become familiar with the basic use of rafts, frames, gear-rigging, safety, repair, maintenance, and flipping. It is perfect for any kayaker whose only knowledge of rafts is that they hold beer or non-boaters who have been invited on their first multi-day river trip. The class will not cover river running skills (future classes may), however this class will provide controlled flip practice in the Myers Pool.

**Cost: \$20, (Class size is limited)**

### Pool Session

May 6th, 12-4 PM

### Instructor:

Erik Rist



## Stroke Tune-up Classes

This class is for kayakers with at least one season of experience on moving water. We will review strokes and techniques for more advanced paddling this season.

**Cost:** \$35 course fee plus pool admission. Includes one 2-hour session in the pool.

We suggest you provide your own equipment (boat, paddle, spray skirt). Boats, paddle and spray skirts will be available with request.

### Class One

Pool Session

March 25, 3:00 – 5:00 PM

### Instructors:

Mark Robbins

### Class Two

Pool Session

May 6, 3:00 – 5:00 PM

### Instructors:

Dick Alweis



## Boating Betties

Beginner/Advanced Beginner classes for women taught by women. These classes are designed for women who are interested in taking their boating to the next level. One session will be taught at the pool and will focus on basic paddling skills and roll practice. There will also be a class on moving water so paddlers can improve their technique on the river. (The location will be decided by the instructors.) After the on river session, join your classmates for a relaxing spa session at one of Colorado's famous hot springs resorts.

**Cost:** \$65 course fee plus pool admission (does not include spa session). Includes one 2-hour session in the pool and one session on moving water.

Participants should have their own equipment (boat, paddle, spray skirt, helmet, PFD, etc.).

### Class One

Pool session

April 29, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

### Instructors:

Cindy Fornstrom

Jenny McCurdy

Moving water session & spa will be scheduled with the class at the pool session.

## Instructor's Corner

CW instructors will be available to help you one-on-one with a skill you may want to develop or improve. Look for a white board at the pool entrance with information on available instructors. Put your name on the board and what boat you are in and the instructor will find you. No cost, but you must provide your own boat, paddle, and spray skirt and be a CW member.

# Mental Toughness Class

**Registration deadline is February 19, 2012!**

Take your boating to the next level!

If you can roll in the pool, but not on the river, this class is for you! The class is designed for kayakers who have basic paddling skills and can roll in the pool, but have difficulty translating their skills to the river. The class has proven successful in helping participants make the transition to more difficult moving water, develop a combat roll, and boost confidence on Class III whitewater. Participants will develop physical and mental skills and confidence to help improve their paddling on the river. Class activities include discussions, boat drills, weekly pool practice, river practice, and river trips.

**Cost:** \$130 course fee plus admission for each pool session. Includes three 2 hour pool sessions and river sessions. **Note:** additional registration in Training Camp is required as well.

Participants should have their own equipment (boat, paddle, spray skirt, helmet, PFD, etc.).

## Class One

Pool sessions

February 26, March 18 & April 22

sessions 3:00 – 5:00

## Instructors:

Mark Robbins

Matt Rensel

River sessions will be scheduled with the class at the pool sessions.

# Precision Boating/Advanced Whitewater Class

So you have run Brown's Canyon for the 50th time, and you want to move up to the Numbers, but you are not sure that you have the skill or confidence to execute the moves in order to safely navigate class IV whitewater. Or perhaps you have been dreaming of that southern hemisphere vacation over the winter, but hesitate to jump into class IV whitewater where portages are difficult and an early exit from the river means a two day jungle tramping nightmare.

This class is designed to teach you skills required for class IV boating and give you the experience to execute them with confidence. You will learn:

- How to effectively catch eddies and use them to control your progress down a rapid and boat scout.
- How to read the river not just for "The Line" in a rapid, but to find eddies and break down a difficult rapid into a series of easier moves.
- Basic slalom kayak skills and how to apply them to running whitewater.
- Basic playboating skills and how to apply them to running whitewater.
- Advanced paddling skills to help you catch eddies, use the current to your advantage and avoid obstacles. Eddy-quiete; how to safely paddle difficult whitewater in a group.

**Instructors:** Steve Dougherty, Cindy Fornstrom, Dan Simon

<u>Times</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Activities</u>
3:00 – 5:00 PM	March 18	Meyers Pool	Mandatory pool session and roll test.
6:00 –9:00 PM	May ?	Golden Playpark	Introductions, playboating
6:00 – 9:00 PM	May ?	Golden Playpark	Slalom gate practice
All Day	TBD	TBD	River day: review and practice skills - class III run
All Day	TBD	TBD	River day: class III/IV run

Moving water session will be scheduled with the class at the pool session.

## **Prerequisites:**

- Basic river rescue class
- At least one season of solid class III boating experience
- River roll

**Cost:** \$180 course fee plus pool admission.

**Register with the instructor, Steve Dougherty, at [sdougherty@erresources.com](mailto:sdougherty@erresources.com).**

Participants should have their own equipment (boat, paddle, spray skirt, helmet, PFD, etc.).



# Kayak Lessons

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Continued from page 1:

## Whitewater Rafting: Therapy For PTSD?

"Being in combat, that adrenaline rush comes with worry," says Bryant. "Deep in your gut, you're not sure if something bad is going to happen until it's all over. But out on the river, you know that if something bad happens, you've got a lot of guys around to help you. So there's no risk of dying."

I'm with Bryant to a point, but when I floated the Lochsa, I knew there was a risk of death. I felt we were challenging a huge natural element, something that was dangerous but not malevolent, something that could kill you but didn't necessarily want to.

There was a lot of teamwork involved in pulling the oars together strongly so we could power the raft over a curl of boiling whitewater without it flipping backward and dumping us into the frigid water.

And when one of my friends, sitting in the seat directly in front of me, got washed into the river, I jumped to my feet, pushed an oar at him, pulled him over to the side of the raft, grabbed the shoulder pads of his life vest, lifted him as high as I could and then fell backward, dragging him on top of me into the raft. What a rush that was!

Adrenaline is a huge part of floating the Lochsa River, just as it's a huge part of surviving combat. But we now know that adrenaline also plays a large role in enhancing memory for emotional events, so that voluntary exercise that involves an adrenaline rush may facilitate the "learning" of safety and the consolidation of new, positive memories.

Paul Gasser, a neuroscientist at Marquette University in Milwaukee, says that just the exercise from extreme sports reduces stress. "Exercise is at least as effective an antidepressant as any of the pharmaceutical treatments," he told me recently.

Gasser and his colleagues have been tracking adrenaline and a hormone called cortisol in both humans and laboratory animals. Adrenaline is secreted into the bloodstream instantly by the adrenal gland during "fight-or-flight" situations because it enhances quick bursts of energy for survival purposes, heightened memory function, and a lower sensitivity to pain. Cortisol, an important stress hormone also secreted by the adrenal gland, acts more slowly to facilitate adaption and recovery after stress.

Neurologists have found that PTSD patients appear to have lower baseline cortisol levels and a decreased cortisol response to stress. This means that these patients appear to have lower levels of the hormone that is critical for relaxing after stress. They say that this may be a risk factor for PTSD, and increasing that cortisol response could facilitate recovery.

Both adrenaline and cortisol are produced during periods of voluntary exercise. Elevating the adrenaline levels during voluntary exercise and the cortisol levels after exercise appears to help the body recover better after stress, says Gasser.

Steve Hale, who deployed to Iraq in 2004-05 with the Washington National Guard, can speak firsthand to the benefits of the X Sports 4 Vets program. "I gave it a shot and really saw the value of it," he told me. "I got a connection between me and the experience and between me and the other guys. It was almost like being born again."

Combat had changed his perspective. "I really believed in the mission until the first bullet skipped across the hood of the vehicle," he says. "Then it was all about self-preservation and helping your buddy get home, too."

When he got home, he wasn't exactly sure who he was, except that he wasn't the same person he had been before Iraq. Like Bryant, Hale was depressed and tended to isolate himself from others. But that made it hard for him to understand that he wasn't alone with his problems. Working and bonding with other vets has given him a chance to see how they are resolving their common problems, says Hale. And then there's that adrenaline rush that Gasser talks about.

"You're on the edge to where it could be dangerous, but it's not," says Hale. "People talk about numbing, but this makes you feel again. It's good to have a pucker factor and your heart race. It's a good positive outlet, not like getting drunk and getting into fights which is how we used to cope. But you can't sustain that morally or legally. This is constructive versus destructive.

"Every time I get out on the river, I come home with stories and big pleasant memories," says Hale. "It does me a lot more good than the pills they've been throwing at me."

Eric Newhouse blogging for Psychology Today at <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/invisible-wounds>



# Colorado Whitewater (CW) Events 2012

## CW Events:

March 15 - Spring Kick Off (Movie Night)  
April 6 - Spring Dinner  
May 12-13 Flat water moving water weekend  
May 18-20 Training Camp  
May 30 - Golden Rodeo (Wed)  
June 1-3 Poudre Weekend  
June 6 - Golden Rodeo (Wed)  
June 13 - Golden Rodeo (Wed)  
June 20 - Golden Rodeo (Wed)  
July 13-15 -Arkansas Weekend  
Sept 7-9 - Upper Colorado Weekend  
Oct TBD - CW Fall Dinner



## CW Classes:

March 18 Beginner Kayaking (Session 1)  
March 18 Hand Roll Class  
March 18 Mental Toughness  
March 18 Advanced Whitewater  
March 18 Beginning Roll  
March 25 Beginner Kayaking (Session 1)  
March 25 Roll Tune-up  
March 25 Beginning Roll  
March 25 Stroke Tune-Up  
March 25 Roll Tune-up  
April 1 Beginner Kayaking (Session 1)  
April 1 Beginning Roll  
April 22 Beginner Kayaking (Session 2&3)  
April 22 Playboating For A Solid Roll  
April 22 Mental Toughness  
April 29 Beginner Kayaking (Session 2&3)  
April 29 Boating Betties  
April 29 Basic Playboating  
May ? Advanced Whitewater  
May 6 Beginner Kayaking (Session 2&3)  
May 6 Roll Tune-up  
May 6 Rafting Class  
June 16-17 Whitewater Safety Class  
September 7-9 Whitewater Safety Class

## Whitewater Festivals 2012

### Colorado Whitewater Festivals/Events:

April 14 School of Mines "Ice Breaker" Races, Golden, CO  
April 20-22 Golden River Sports Sale & Gear Swap  
May 25-28 Yampa River Festival, Steamboat Springs, CO  
May 25-27 Paddle Fest, Buena Vista, CO  
May 30, June 6, 13, 20 Golden Rodeo Series  
May 31-June 3 Teva Mountain Games, Vail, CO  
June 8-10 Lyons Outdoor Games, Lyons, CO  
June 9-10 Rocky Mountain Surf Festival, Glenwood Springs  
June 14-17 FIBARK, Salida, CO  
June 22-23 Royal Gorge Whitewater Festival, Canon City  
June 22-25 Gunnison River Festival, Gunnison, CO  
June 23-24 "Creek at the Peak" Races, Idaho Springs, CO  
August 10-12 Bailey Fest, Bailey, CO  
August 24-26 Golden River Sports Sale & Gear Swap  
Thursdays- Mem Day to Lab Day, Golden Playpark, Free  
Demo Evenings  
Gore Canyon Race-TBA

For a complete list of All Colorado Festivals (music etc) go to:  
<http://coloradoinfo.com/festivals-fairs>



### National Festivals:

March 16-18 Alabama Mountain Games, Cleveland, AL  
March 16-18 Santa Cruz Paddle Surf Festival, Santa Cruz, CA  
April 21-22 Kern River Festival, Kernville, CA  
April 20-22 East Coast Canoe and Kayak Festival, Charleston, SC  
April 21-22 Northwest Creeking Competition, Canyon Creek, WA  
April 28-29 Spring Paddle Festival Portland, Vancouver, WA  
May 5 Cheat River Festival, WV  
May 26-27 Bigfork Whitewater Festival, Bigfork, MT  
May 26 Maupin RiverFest, Maupin, OR  
May 11-13 Spring Black Moose Fest, Lyons Falls, NY  
May 19-20 Upper Clackamas Whitewater Festival, OR  
June 9-10 Wausau Riverfest, Wausau, WI  
June 15-17 Reno River Festival, Reno, NV  
June 30 Deerfield Fest, Charlemont, MA  
September 7 First Gauley River Release, WV  
September 14-16 Gauley Fest, Summersville, WV



# International Kayak Trip Spotlight

Insider information on international kayak destinations.

By: Erik Rist

## Thailand

Water season: May-December

High Water: August-September

Rivers: Mae Taeng and Pai Rivers

Nearest International Airport: Chiang Mai

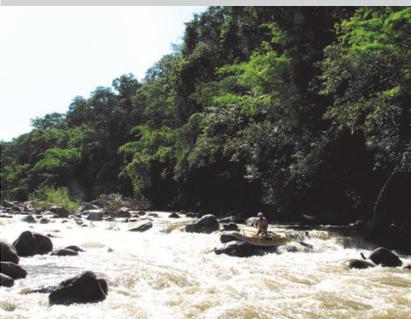
Outfitters to contact: Thai Adventure Rafting (Pai) and Siam Adventures (Chiang Mai)



Thailand does not have an abundance of whitewater but if you plan to vacation in Thailand there are two rivers worthy of making plans to kayak or raft.

Both rivers are within a few hours drive of the northern city of Chiang Mai which you can book an international flight to.

Outfitters are limited and unregulated in any western sense. In my experience Thai Adventure and Siam Adventures are the only two outfitters I would feel comfortable running with. I worked for both companies at one time or another.



The Pai River is one of my favorite rivers. It is located near the picturesque mountain town of Pai (three hours from Chiang Mai). Pai is a favorite destination among backpackers and is known for its relaxed atmosphere, trekking, hot springs, Thai hippies, and elephant camps. The Pai River is class III but at high water it begins to creep up to class



IV. It is a fun river at lower water and has many small play features and at higher water it is a blast. Meandering through lush remote jungle foliage, the Pai River is typically run as a two day

trip with a bamboo jungle camp serving as an overnight destination. Dinner and camp fire included. The trip is about 37 miles and has 12-20 rapids spread over the long mileage. Monkeys, sloths, and water buffalo are not uncommon sites along the river edge. The local guides are friendly, fun, and very competent.

Thai Adventure has been around for over 20 years and was the first whitewater company to operate in Thailand. It is owned by an English speaking Frenchman named Guy Gorias. One of the friendliest and most knowledgeable characters in Thailand, Guy will likely be the one welcoming you to Pai, pointing you in the direction of the best food in Thailand, and providing the always entertaining safety talk. Thai Adventure is primarily a rafting company, however they have been developing a guided kayak program. It is possible to put together kayak expeditions if you provide them with enough advance notice. Trip safety and guiding may be conducted from a raft.



The Mae Taeng is the other boating option of Thailand. The Mae Taeng River is typically reached by a two and half hour van ride from Chiang Mai although jungle camps are available for over night accommodation at the river. It is a fairly remote jungle environment with several hill tribe villages and elephant camps nestled along the river.

The whitewater on the Mae Taeng is short but furious. It is considered class IV but many people regard it as class V. If you catch it at high water, as I did my first day, I would agree that it is closer to class V. The boatable stretch is about 5-7 miles long, and there are only four or five significant rapids which line up for a one mile frenzied succession of whitewater. It is a fairly creek river with several steep drops. A fair comparison might be the Upper Youghiogheny. Siam River Adventures runs rafting tours and kayak trips on the



Upper Youghiogheny. Siam River Adventures runs rafting tours and kayak trips on the

Mae Taeng. The company was originally started by an American named Jason Younkin. A class V kayaker, Jason spent time working on the Arkansas River.



If you are looking to kayak the Mae Taeng, Siam is the only company I know of who can facilitate. They have an eclectic selection of kayaks to choose from but don't expect to find the latest Jackson models. Gear is very expensive to import and if you bring your own you may be able to make a nice trade. Ask ahead.

Siam provides classes and guided trips. They typically have one western safety kayaker on staff. If you plan



to run the class IV-V section make sure you are not pushing the envelope of your skill level. A road runs along the river and rapids can easily be portaged by pickup if you are only looking to run only the mellower sections. The company is very good at facilitating this.

The guides at both companies are all local and extremely competent but they do possess their own flare that would make the most laid back western guide feel anal. They also have improvisational skills that frequently made me feel like a first year cub scout. Before I worked in Thailand I would have said it was impossible to top-off a raft without a pump... now I know better.



You can contact either company at their websites: [thairafting.com](http://thairafting.com) (not to be confused with "pai adventure") or [siamrivers.com](http://siamrivers.com).

Also I found china air usually had the best prices for airfare.

If you have an international river you would like to write about in future issues please email: [erik@ristlaw.com](mailto:erik@ristlaw.com)



## Announcing Guest Speakers For The CW Spring Dinner 2012!

Author, actor, climber, kayaker, bicyclist, paraglider, skier, teacher, coach, motivational speaker, reality tv star, humanitarian. World Class Athlete. World Class Adventurer. But perhaps best known for the one thing none of us would ever consider: being blind. Most famously, on May 25, 2001, **Erik Weihenmayer** became the only blind man in history to reach the summit of the world's highest peak - Mount Everest. His kayaking conquests are numerous and locally include Waterton Canyon, sections of the Arkansas River, the Colorado River and the Poudre. Also, many rivers in Morocco, and most recently in



Southern Mexico including the Usumacinta River, waterfalls of Busiljá. For Erik's complete bio, please visit: <http://www.touchthetop.com/about.htm>

Fundraising Donation Items for giveaways including a Jackson Kayak!

Plus, we welcome from Team Jackson - **Stephen Wright!** Accomplishments: Keener Program Head coach, 3-Time US National Freestyle Champion, 3rd World Championships 2009, US Freestyle team member 2009 & 2011 and 2011 Pan American Champion. His kayaking accomplishments will boggle your mind! For Stephen's bio, please visit:



<http://jacksonkayak.com/team-jk/factory-team/stephen-wright/>  
**As our venue has limited space (and will sell out), prepaid reservations are required.**

**Fundraising Donation Items for giveaways including a Jackson Kayak!**

**Date:** Friday, Apr 6, 2012

**Time:** 6pm for cocktails / 7pm for dinner

**Place:** The Golden Hotel, 800 Eleventh St, Golden, CO 80401 (right on Clear Creek)

**Contact:** [PLaBarge@Hotmail.com](mailto:PLaBarge@Hotmail.com)

**Cost:** \$25 for members (your CW Membership must be up-to-date) and \$30 for non-





**Good News:** CW offers a 50% discount for our Flat Water / Moving Water Weekend (usually held the weekend before TC) Course if you sign up in advance for TC as well. Prices are VERY reasonable so please see our "Instruction Page" on our website for a listing of classes and dates (space is limited). Or contact Mark Robbins for discount, scheduling and more information at MRobbins@Frii.com.

### **Level B**

This category fits if: you have been in a kayak on moving water (you have had 6 hours or more of formal moving water instruction). You have performed a wet exit on moving water and are comfortable with bow rescues. You can at least attempt a combat roll and have a 50% success rate (rolling upright). You can maneuver your boat with 100% control on flat water. You know what an eddy turn, a peel out and a cross-river ferry are and have sufficient practice on moving water with these concepts with at least an 80% success rate (without flipping over).

### **Level C**

This category fits if: you have a solid flat-water roll (100%) and are totally comfortable doing peel outs, ferrying and catching eddies on moving water. You are completely confident on Class II whitewater and want to improve your skills. You have at least an 85% success rate with your combat roll.

### **Level D**

This category fits if: you have a solid river combat roll (100%) and are comfortable and want to improve your skills in Class III whitewater. You should consider volunteering for TC if you are at this level. The more-the merrier and we'd appreciate the help!

### **Classes**

On your registration form let us know your class preference from the list below. Five person minimum per class.

### **Getting Started (Level A)**

Sat /Sun Package: New to kayaking or just want to get your confidence up? This session starts on flat water where you will learn (or review) basic skills including safety, familiarization with your equipment and boat handling. At the end of the first day (and also on the second day) the group will graduate to easy sections of moving water.

### **Float Trip (Levels B, C and D)**

Offered Sat and/or Sun. No frills, no thrills, this is a gentle float down a quiet stretch of moving water. No pressure, no skills drills, just easygoing fun in a kayak or duckie.

### **Skills Drills (Levels B, C and D)**

Offered Sat and/or Sun. Work on basic skills such as paddle strokes, catching eddies, peel outs, ferries, rolling and river reading. Participants are encouraged to ask lots of questions and let trip coordinators know which skills they most want to work on. Emphasis will be placed on river running and skills drills.

### **Intro to Playboating (Level C and D Only)**

Offered Sat only. Learn beginner playboating skills such as surfing waves, stern squirts and side surfing. This group requires solid river skills and a solid river roll. This class

will start with flat water maneuvers and move to the play park in Salida (water level permitting).

### **Reading Whitewater (Levels B, C and D)**

Offered Sat only. So you are getting down river OK but you have anxiety about finding the best route through a rapid? This class will develop your ability to visually dissect whitewater and better understand the forces at work. Be more confident in your ability to negotiate a rapid and to recognize typical obstacles you may encounter.

### **Basic Safety Class (Levels B, C and D)**

Offered Sun only. This is a one-day class designed for newer paddlers who want to learn the basics of whitewater safety, rescue skills, and how to stay safe on the river. The class will be taught on Sunday in conjunction with the CW TC. There will be exercises in safely swimming a rapid and practice sessions with throw bags and live swimmers. The class is half dry land and half on the water. Bring a chair to be comfortable for the morning dry land activities. You must have appropriate attire for afternoon the water activities as we promise you will be wet and cold. A dry suit or a wetsuit with a paddling top are strongly encouraged. Thick-soled shoes (preferably closed toe), helmet and PDF are required.

### **Learn to Lead (Level C and D Only)**

Offered Sun only. This one day class will cover the skills you need to lead your own trips. Students should be skilled paddlers who don't need guidance and have experience as a sweep boater. Have you ever wondered how to pick a river, put a group on and lead them down the river to the takeout? How to make sure your charges are prepared and not in over their heads and how to get the group safely down river? This class will cover the mechanics of putting a trip together, how to manage that group on the river and how to lead them through rapids. The class will also review safety topics including throw rope handling, swimmer rescue, rescue priority and hypothermia.

### **Volunteers NEEDED**

As in past years, we are looking for advanced boaters to help lead and sweep. We are also looking for an "At-Camp" dog sitter or two. If you are willing to volunteer to help make TC a success, please send a message to Patty LaBarge at PLaBarge@Hotmail.com. **Please RSVP as soon as possible for organizational purposes.** Please specify if you have a current First Aid/CPR certification (not required, but preferred) and if you would like to Lead or Sweep. Please also let me know what levels or classes you are interested in volunteering for (not guaranteed, but I will do my best). Donation fee for volunteers is \$20 per person to cover the cost of camping and meals.

**NOTE:** You must have a certain skill level to be both a lead and a sweep. Swimming is not an option. Please do not volunteer if you do not have appropriate skills. You may be asked to fill out a volunteer application for approval.

### **Questions?**

Email Patty LaBarge at PLaBarge@Hotmail.com



# PADDLEFEST

LET THE PADDLING BEGIN...

MAY 25 THRU 27 BUENA VISTA CO

COLORADO KAYAK SUPPLY IS HOSTING A HUGE KICKOFF PARTY TO CELEBRATE THE START OF THE PADDLING SEASON. JOIN US FOR AN ACTION PACKED WEEKEND FULL OF FUN & EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR PADDLERS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

[ckspaddlefest.com](http://ckspaddlefest.com)

