

## Adventure Education Conference

By: Trent Rogers

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*“Students volunteered for this wonderful opportunity to gain event planning experience”*

This past November 2, 2012 the 20th annual Adventure Education Conference returned to its founding institution, Western Carolina University, once more. A committee was formed from only a handful of Parks and Recreational Management professors and students, we began the initial planning process this past spring semester. Thanks to the previous experience's of Dr. Phipps and Dr. Tholkes with planning the past conferences, it made for an easier adjustment into planning the event. For the students who were volunteering their time, we were all very thankful for!

Dr. Phipps created a

P.E.R.T. chart, which every PRM major learns in class and implements, and posted it on a wall which we followed to meet deadlines and to keep everyone on track with our progress. Responsibilities were divided amongst the staff and students and meetings were planned for every two weeks, at first, as to update the committee and to see where more attention should be applied. Some of the responsibilities included: allocating participant parking, creating a T-shirt design, collecting door prizes, communicating with Aramark for food and with the U.C. center for room reservations and equipment. Most of these responsibilities were

carried out by students who volunteered for this wonderful opportunity to gain event planning experience. When summer approached we had one final meeting then regrouped when school started back in August. Once we all became re-accustomed to a school schedule the time seemed to fly by!

For our marketing plan, students approached many recreational commercial businesses in the surrounding areas. They meet and worked together with business owners to gather over fifty items to give away for the door prizes! The prizes ranged from hats, t-shirts, koozies, multi tools, to gift cards and certificates, a hammock, and several Columbia backpacks.

## Adventure Education Conference....cont. from pg. 1



The prizes ranged from hats, t-shirts, koozies, multi tools, to gift cards and certificates, a hammock, and several Columbia backpacks. We sent out invitations and sign up sheets to colleges in the surrounding areas and, including WCU's attendees, we had about 200 participants registered to show up! With the amount of people coming and the number of resources we had at our disposal, we wanted to set the bar high on overall satisfaction for the next conference.

We were able to reserve multiple rooms in the U.C. and the U.C. parking lot for the buses and cars to park in. We arranged to have breakfast and lunch provided by Aramark, the rock wall in the recreational center for a climbing session, and equipment for the high angle rescue. We filled the time slots in the itinerary with workshops that were relevant to our field. We created a logo, road signs, gathered bags and materials for gift bags, printed itiner-

aries and t-shirts, and booked all guest speakers. Before we knew it November 2 was here and everyone showed up to experience what we had put together.

The interim dean of Education and Allied Professions, Dr. Dale Carpenter, gave the welcoming speech to the participants which led into the keynote speech. Windy Gordon's, keynote speech followed the conference's them of 20 years of adventure, his topic "Twenty Years Later: We Are Bigger; Are We Better?". After a short break the participants were able to choose between six different workshops before lunch such as; National Standards in Professional Development, Teaching Youth in the Outdoor Classroom, and certification pros and cons.

After the Mexican lunch buffet and dinner the participants ventured toward the second workshop activities such as; Bow Drill Fires, WCU Climbing Wall, and High Angle Rock Rescue. At Both climbing events certified professionals and professors were on site to observe and supervise the activity. Dr. Tholkes and his instructors took a group out to Catamount Gap while Base Camp Cullowhee Supervised groups in the Recreational Center. After one final short inter-mission the participants went to their last workshop including; Adaptive Adventure Activities, Risk Taking as a Tool, Enhancing Wilderness Programs, and WCU

Climbing Wall.

After all the workshops were completed the participants all congregated on the U.C. lawn to be instructed on the final activity. Earl Davis, founder and instructor at Moonshadow Learning services, facilitated the final activity with the help of some PRM students in his High Ropes Facilitation course. The objective of the activity was a competition to see which team could build the highest standing tower, but it had to be connected to the towers on both sides. Only one person could build at a time and for only thirty seconds then would rotate, this kept all teams in constant communication and with high spirits! Once time stopped all building ceased and the test to see which tower stood the longest began. Not even thirty seconds passed when a large gust of wind blew down most of the towers, as if Mother Nature herself were waiting for the perfect time to shake their foundations. It was humorous to watch as only a few struggled to stand tall and left everyone with a smile.



*“set a new bar for what to expect at the next Adventure Conference”*

After the activity the schools got together and related the activity to a life metaphor that was applicable in all of our lives. Once the activity was completed we all headed back into the U.C. Grand Room where we handed out all of our door prizes and thanked everyone for their time and participation at the Adventure Education Conference. Most everyone left with a door prize, a smile, and in a good mood but as for the staff we left with a weight of our backs and a feeling of satisfaction of a job well done.

After a couple days of relaxation and recovery from planning this event we all met up to reflect upon the event and to evaluate the performance for both planning and the implementation for the conference. With only a few things to consider for the next conference, we were all very satisfied with the experience and outcome of the event. Nothing went wrong, there were no emergencies, and everyone returned safe and sound. For the students involved this was amazing experience in program planning and a wonderful resume builder, we were able to practice skills taught to us in class in an in-field job setting. We hope we set a new bar for what to expect at the next Adventure Conference, all the hard work and effort by the entire staff and students paid off tremendously and shows what can happen when we all work together to produce the best product that we can.



## Musings from Maurice



My shoulder recoveries allowed me to get out on the water a lot this summer both locally and in Idaho. The family did the Middle Fork of the Salmon River – great boating and great service as we had the royal treatment from the guides who put our tents up, cooked gourmet meals, entertained us with great music as well as guiding rafts. My daughter, Steph and myself kayaked the whole hundred miles. We also visited my younger daughter who was interning in New York – a real change of pace. We travelled by train to New York, which was just about as stressful as driving the four days to Idaho!

At WCU we had a very active semester this fall. We started early in September with the Old Cullowhee Canoe Slalom raising awareness of Old Cullowhee and funds for the proposed River Park. We had good weather and a nice mix of students, community and youngsters. Planning had already begun in the spring for the Regional Adventure Conference and the

planning team launched into the planning again full steam. In the middle of all this, Duke Energy requested that we do a study of user satisfaction for the first ever recreation release of the Upper Nantahala and so another team got organized under the direction of Cass collecting and analyzing data. We are really pleased to have Cass join us as our community recreation expert. Believe it or not but at the same time we had to put together an article for the North Carolina Parks and Recreation magazine as PRM is featured in the next issue. Besides this, we are submitting a grant to Blue Ridge Heritage Partnerships to designate the Tuckaseegee as a River Heritage Corridor. Phew, where's the Red Bull!

Well we, at this time of writing, are still in the middle of the research and grant projects but the conference went off incredibly well. Congratulations to the planning team who did a great job organizing this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary event with 200 participants. The

final session, the big game symbolized the energy at the conference with participants all involved in a complex initiative and fully involved at that. The creations for the game were coming along well until the wind had a lot to “say” which brought forth lots of colorful metaphors as the “buildings” flew away.

The PRM 361 course got into a lot of planning as well this semester with 8 different projects for WCU students, schools and the community. They included: a fly fishing workshop, initiatives for after school kids, activities for home school kids, a backwoods cooking class, a hiking trip, a climbing day for the Boy Scouts, a Project Wild Workshop for Cashiers Charter School and an Alcohol Awareness workshop. Look for the evaluations of some of these at the Undergraduate Research Symposium next semester. We have Cian Stephenson visiting from Ireland and Sam Judson visiting Ireland. Ask Cian or Cat Manasa if you think you would like to spend a year over there.

It is a very different experience and has been enjoyed by several of our students now. Cat spent last year and even managed gaining a BA while there. For everyone here in North Carolina, as this semester comes to a close, start gearing up for winter in Cullowhee. A lot of locals are predicting snow so come prepared.

# A Hike Into the Woods By: Trent Rogers



For the Parks and Recreational Management program we have to complete a four hundred hour internship, for mine I choose to volunteer for Friends of Panthertown over this past summer. The chance to have real work experience in my field was an opportunity I didn't want to pass up! I first heard about Friends of Panthertown through research, in Debbie Singleton's Entrepreneur and

*“It was great public relations experience and an amazing chance to practice interpersonal communication skills”*

Commercial Recreation class, for a business plan I had to create for a project. I was intrigued by a couple of things about their organization; they were non-profit group, worked in partnership with the National Forest Service, and maintained a large area of trail systems. Seeing as they really appreciate any volunteer work and I had to complete four hundred hours anyways, I figured why not, I could learn a lot from this organi-

zation and what they stand for, and have fun while getting credit for it!

Friends of Panthertown is a non-profit organization that maintains and protects 6,400 acres of back country wilderness area in the Nantahala National Forest. They are in partnership with the National Forest Service where they assist by provid-

ing labor, volunteers, and funding for conservation efforts while engaging the public in forest stewardship. On all trail work days participants are enthusiastic to break a sweat while getting their hands dirty, and the trail boss and other veteran volunteers talk about the history of and the plant life located throughout the valley. It's a wonderful experience to be a part of and the volunteers feel accomplished when they look back and can see the results from their hard work.

For the internship my duties ranged from helping supervise trail work days, public relations, event setup and research. I attended Greening Up the Mountain in downtown Sylva, R.E.I. National Trail Workday, Telluride Film Festival, Black Rock Horse Exposition, and the Lake Tox-away Exposition. For all these events I represented Friends of Panthertown, set the booth and displays, talked to people about the valley, with all the beauty it holds, answered questions about recreational opportunities, and persuaded people to become a member to help support

and protect Panthertown Valley. It was a great public relations experience and an amazing chance to practice interpersonal communication skills. On trail work days I helped supervise and instruct participants on proper equipment safety, trail maintenance, and tried my best to identify plants and trees throughout the hike.

When I wasn't outside I was behind my desk researching potential grants that could be acquired for future funding and how similar organizations were being funded and if it could be relevant to Friends of Panthertown.

From my experiences working with the Friends of Panthertown I have learned many characteristics about myself both professionally and personally. I've learned how to positively represent an agency to the public, techniques to self-motivate volunteers, how to effectively communicate with the public and members, how to carry a professional meeting, and the importance of volunteering and how it impacts the community. This internship was an amazing way to spend my summer and a valuable experience getting to work in the field of Recreation.



## The Choice is Yours By: Jillian Jones

This past summer I had the opportunity to work at a YMCA summer camp in Colorado as the ropes course director. This was a great summer job and I could not have asked for a better work experience. The camp was located 30 minutes west of Pikes Peak and an hour southwest of Denver in the front range of mountains. I was living in the Rocky Mountains and I had an endless amount of opportunities for outdoor activities. The people of Colorado are very welcoming and they live a very active lifestyle.

*“Needless to say he was **VERY IMPRESSED** that I had previous knowledge of the ideology”*

During my staff training I was learning about the camp and what my responsibilities were. The camp had a climbing wall, high ropes course and a zip line. For a child coming to camp this was the best playground ever. I was trained as a challenge course facilitator level 1 with high ropes rescue. This training provided me with the knowledge to perform my job while keeping the campers as safe as possible. Other training that I went through included subjects that involved how to handle children when they have an emotional breakdown, how to handle children with behavioral issues and so on.

My boss was telling me about what I should include in my safety talk before I guided the campers on the ropes course. He taught me

about the tone of my voice, what to say about the equipment and how to keep them engaged. The most important thing to include besides safety and the type of equipment was the challenge by choice philosophy. This ideology is stressed in the WCU Parks and Recreation program by Dr. Maurice Phipps. Phipps teaches this philosophy in all of his classes. As soon as my boss told me to include this, I told him that I had learned about challenge by choice in my classes. Needless to say he was very impressed that I had previous knowledge of the ideology.

After the first week of campers coming and going, I had my safety briefing down pat. I talked about the challenge by choice ideology everyday and became very familiar with it. One thing that I observed from the campers this summer was that their mindset changed once they were informed about the challenge by choice philosophy. They felt more comfortable knowing that no one was forcing them to make it to the top of the climbing wall and that it was their choice. I feel that having this ideology incorporated into my daily introduc-

tion speech attributed to the successfulness of the summer. My previous knowledge helped me do my job effectively this summer. Overall I had a blast working in Colorado and wouldn't change it for the world.



*\*\*Photo provided  
by [https://  
www.facebook.com/  
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p.com/](http://www.tampaa-dventuregroup.com/)*

# Cheerio Adventures

By: Richard Brule



\*\*photo provided by <http://www.campcheerio.org/adv/>\*\*

This summer I worked at Cheerio Adventures, an adventure summer camp in Mouth of Wilson, Virginia which offered weeklong trips for kids. I was a trip leader

*“Sometimes I found it hard to believe they were paying us to do the activities we love every day”*

and was in charge of a small group of 6-12 kids. During these trips we would take the kids backpacking, rock climbing, caving, whitewater rafting, canoeing, mountain biking, and kayaking. It was a great job and sometimes I found it hard to believe they were

paying us to do the activities we love every day. It is a great camp and I really liked how the trips were organized throughout the week.

On Sunday the kids would arrive, unpack their bags, check out equipment they needed for the week such as tents and backpacks, and pack for the departure of the

trip. Monday, we would wake up, give the kids a lesson on how to cook in camp (we use a two burner propane stove, as does Base Camp Cullowhee), and depart for backpacking. Depending on the group’s age we either took the kids to Grayson Highlands State Park in Virginia, or Linville near Hunt Fish Falls. After we arrived at our trailhead we would begin instructing on how to backpack and then began to head down the trail with one trip leader in lead and another in sweep. We would usually arrive at camp three hours later giving us time to set up tents, filter water, cook, clean, and get all the kids to sleep.

For Tuesday we would pack our bags up and hike to the rock climbing site, where we would give a climbing and rappelling ground school. Most of the time I found myself belaying the climbers, but my favorite job was to take pictures of them while tethered to the top. After several hours of climbing it would be time to hike back to the bus and drive to the caving camp site. We would take the younger kids in the Speedwell Cave in Speedwell, Virginia which is small and muddy and the older kids would go to Worley’s Cave in Bluff City, Tennessee. Caving was always my favorite activity because of the amazing formations, stalactites, and stalagmites. A typical caving trip would last between 2-4 hours and we would leave straight from the cave to the Ace Adventure Resort on the New River Gorge in West Virginia. Once we arrived we would set up our campsite and after that was done we then headed down to the adven-

ture lake before it got dark.

The lake had a zip line, blob, many slides and trampolines as well as a beach and rock wall. As trip leaders, this was our resting period before rafting all day for Thursday.

Rafting was the favorite day for most of us because of the intense whitewater with class 4 and 5 rapids. We also passed under the New River Bridge, the longest single arched commercial bridge in the world and learned a lot about the Gorge’s history and revitalization. When the rafting day was over we would finally head back to base camp in Virginia. Canoeing and kayaking was on Friday and was a great way to end the week with lots of games in the water, surfing waves, and running class 3 rapids. We would begin the trip at base camp, which is also located on the New River, and the younger kids would paddle about 3 miles to encounter class 2 rapids. Whereas the older kids would paddle 6 miles and paddle class 2 and 3 rapids. I always enjoyed leading the river trips because it allowed me to practice my paddling skills in friendly whitewater.

The campers would leave on Saturday morning and the trip leaders would be left to their free time. It was funny though, because we did the same things on our free time as we did on the job, like hiking and rock climbing, just on the weekends. I had a great time this summer to say the least and I know the campers had a great time too. I may find myself working there again next year because of all the great experiences and people I met.

# My Summer Experience

By: Logan Gregory



This summer I worked as an Intern at a local rafting company “Tuckasegee Outfitters”. My boss and the owner of the outfitters was James R. Jackson. My official job title was Raft Guide and most would assume that I would just be taking our guests down the river and that my job would consist of that and only that. This was not what I found I was doing. Actually very little of my time at work was spent on the river. When I was new and fresh the first few weeks I had it easy as business was slow and all I had to do was load boats onto the trailer and drive the shuttle up to the boat launch. But as the summer went on my role at work was to be part of a team.

## *Teamwork*

As mentioned before, the first couple of weeks my job only consisted of loading boats and driving shuttles. This worked for us at first when business was slow

but as business picked up we found that just having me do these things was not the most efficient way to work. To fix this problem we started to all work as a team, meaning that we could all do each task and knew how to perform each role at the outfitters whether it was: running the cash register, managing waivers, handing out the paddles and life jackets, loading boats onto the trailers & tying them down, giving the pre-trip safety talk, or driving the shuttle up to the boat launch. All the employees at the Outfitters could do all of these things. This really helped us all out when we found ourselves in a rush if we saw something that needed to be done or saw someone that needed help doing their job, we could step in and assist our co-workers no matter what they are doing.

## *Judgment*

Our guests would always question us upon their arrival. They would want to know things such as: “How intense the river was?”, “If they would get wet?”, “Does the river go in a circle?”, “Can we bring our dog?”, and “Can we bring alcohol?” They would ask a variety of things and sometimes we would find their questions amusing. Most the time our answer to their questions would be “Sir/Ma’am that is your

call.” This would be the answer to things such as “What should we do tube, fun-yak, or raft?” “What boat should we take?” “Can our kids do this?” “Can we put three small kids in a two person fun-yak?” These are all what I like to call judgment questions. They are the customers’ decision and if they used good judgment they will usually make the right choice. We did have some rules in place concerning who could participate in each activity but they were only minimum and maximum weights. You weren’t allowed to bring pets or alcohol. Other than those few rules your river trip was your river trip. We tried to give the guests as much control over their trip as possible as long as they did not endanger themselves or the equipment; we really left a lot of the decisions up to them to ensure customer satisfaction.

## *Perception*

There has been a lot of time spent in our PRM courses talking about the way people perceive an activity they are about to participate in. The way you perceive something or simply put envisioning yourself doing the activity can be completely different from what the activity is really like. We had guests nearly every day that would either come in knowing their float would be a simple flat-water

# TUCKÁSEEGEE OUTFITTERS

paddle or they had no idea of what they were signing up for. People in today's world do not stop to think about important things such as; "Am I in good enough physical shape to participate in this activity?" "Can I keep myself and my family safe on this trip?" "Do I know what to do in case of an emergency on the water?" then gave them their safety talk.

One great example of this would be the day that we nearly had to dial 911 for two of our guests. We had an elderly couple come into the outfitters that wanted to paddle one of our double kayaks. We outfitted them with gear I ended up being assigned to drive their shuttle up to the boat launch. My first clear warning sign that they were not physically prepared for this trip was the amount of trouble they had getting into the boat. I did however ask them before they got on the water "Are you sure you're ready for this?" They answered that "Yes!" they seemed eager to get on the water so I gave them their final push and sent them on their way.

As it became time for our elderly couple to be getting back to the outfitter's they were nowhere to be found. They became 20 minutes late, then 30 minutes late, then 40 minutes, then an hour. This means that this couple has been on the water past the expected two hours it normal takes for the trip plus the late time which totaled about three and a half hours.

After sending them on their way the couple quickly found that they did not have the upper body or core strength to successfully maneuver the boat. Not to mention

that neither person had any experience in paddling a boat. Upon their arrival back to the outfitters they told all the guides about their trip and how they were stuck on every rock. Then something happened that no one expected. The woman of the couple gets out of the boat and tells me we need to advertise that the trip is a whitewater trip not a lazy river. My response to the woman was that whitewater is posted inside and outside in multiple areas. We also had pictures from the river on the wall inside the store. This was just one incident that happened this summer that I felt could have been prevented. This became the subject of my project that I did for my internship at the outfitters. I used a helmet camera to get actual footage of the rapids to illustrate exactly what the trip would entail.

*"The woman tells me.... we need to advertise that the trip is a whitewater trip not a lazy river"*



[http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g49667-d3195977-Reviews-Tuckaseegee\\_Outfitters-Whittier\\_North\\_Carolina.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g49667-d3195977-Reviews-Tuckaseegee_Outfitters-Whittier_North_Carolina.html)

## Why not Ireland? By: Kat Manasa

Studying abroad for a year in Ireland was the best decision I have ever made. Not only is it a great opportunity to travel and explore the world a bit, but I got college credit for it to. All the courses and credit hours I took at Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT), transferred back to WCU. Also, since it is a three year college, and I was there my third year and passed all my classes, I earned

*“Since it is a direct exchange through WCU, you pay regular tuition and the best part is that you can still get financial aid”*

a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Outdoor Education and Leisure.

Many people hesitate to study abroad because they think it will be too expensive and they will not be able to afford it, well think again. Since it is a direct exchange through WCU, you pay regular tuition through WCU, and the best part is

that you can still get financial aid. The only major extra cost is the plane ticket to get you there.

There are many benefits to taking Parks and Recreation classes in Ireland. First, you get more field experience and hands on learning. For example, I took a class called Outdoor Recreational Activities 3, where every Tuesday

you had the option of doing one of many outdoor activities. You could choose from sailing, kayaking, windsurfing, caving, open boating, bush craft, and even rock climbing. Not only was it fun to participate in one of these each week, but you could log hours towards a certification or instructorship.

I was able to receive six certifications for the school year I was in Ireland, but I could have gotten a few more. Certifications including, Endurance 1 and 2, Rescue 1 and 2, Beach Life Guard, Basic Life Support 1 and 2, Caving Fundamentals, Power Boating and Safety Boating. The majority of them are earned in some of the classes, which make it easier to be motivated and almost guarantees you the certification. Even when you see all your classmates having to pay a few Euros to get their certifications, you can look at them and say, "Western pays for mine". That really comes in handy when you want to take the three-day power boating/safety boating course, and everyone else has to pay a couple hundred Euro, and you do not.

Of all the things I miss about Ireland, I miss the people there the most. Fitting in with the Outdoor Education majors is something anyone can do. It is easy to make long lasting friendships with everyone there, and these friendships all began with a three day canoe expedition for the first three days of classes all the third years in Outdoor Education took a canoe expedition on two

different lakes. It was the first time meeting all the other third years in our major, and they were more than welcoming. There were only about thirty of us all together, so if you like the small community and sense of family then this is the perfect school for you. Everyone knows everyone, and for the most part everyone gets along great.

Studying abroad in Ireland opens up a lot of travel opportunities since nowhere is too far, nor too expensive to get to. I attended the GMIT Mountaineering Club's rock climbing trip to Spain for a week, and the plane ticket cost less than one hundred euro. Plus we got to spend a week in Spain rock climbing, spending time with some good friends, and meeting some of the locals. Traveling around Europe is an easy thing to do on school breaks and there are lots of opportunities to travel with classmates and friends because often times, students will get together and plan a trip and invite everyone like a sailing trip to Mallorca, Spain or even a ski trip to France! There are endless opportunities to travel and meet new people while studying abroad, and you would have to be a fool not to do it!



# The Importance of Whitewater By Safety By: Annabell Plush

*“In my four years of whitewater kayaking, I have found safety to be one of the most important elements in making paddling a lifelong sport”*

In the spring of 2012, the whitewater paddling community was rocked by the death of professional paddler Jenna Watson on the Little White Salmon after she swam into a cave. At the end of the summer season, in early September, we lost another great paddler that many looked to for inspiration and instruction. Jeff West died while paddling alone on the Stikine River in British Columbia. Whitewater kayaking is an inherently dangerous activity that uses danger as a draw. We are attracted to the “life-on-the-edge” mentality of a sport many people find terrifying. In my four years of whitewater kayaking, I have found safety to be one of the most important elements in making paddling a lifelong sport. Things like staying within your limit, always having people you trust with you, and carrying the right equipment can make a huge difference in the quality and safety of your trip.

From the first time I rolled a kayak, safety first was drilled into my head. I learned how to wet exit before I even flipped, so I was insured a way out even though I was safe in a pool. As I began to step my paddling up and get on class III rivers, I learned the importance of float bags to help prevent a boat

from pinning, and was chastised many times for forgetting my throw rope. I learned quickly that while on the river, getting myself down safely was as important as keeping an eye on my cohorts and being ready to throw a rope whenever it was needed.

A lesson I learned early on was not to overestimate my paddling abilities. Rolling in a pool is very different from rolling in class III whitewater which is very different from rolling in the middle of a class IV rapid. Stepping it up too quickly in whitewater can result in dangerous situations as well as a bruised ego. My first trip down the Chattooga’s Sect III ended with my pride hurt and a scary swim where my head got stuck in a rock for a moment. I had overestimated my ability to paddle, and as a result had a scary encounter that kept me from paddling for another 2 months. Stepping up in paddling can be healthy, but it can also be dangerous when you aren’t ready to step up. Years later, when I was able to tackle my first class V rapid, I was glad I had spent months training on class IV because I felt confident and knew I was keeping myself and my friends safe.

Paddling alone is a tricky decision that is deeply personal to make. I have always heard that paddling alone is extremely dangerous.

Accidents are never planned and you never know when you will need someone to have your back. Rivers are a very fluid and dynamic environment that are constantly changing. A rapid you

have run a hundred times may change overnight due to a flash flood or a rockslide. In order to stay safe in such an ever-changing sport, we need to have people we trust with us who can help us when we get into sticky situations.

My husband always says the goal is to be life paddlers, not college paddlers. By having the right equipment, progressing slowly, and having safe people around, I hope to be able to paddle for years to come. Good judgment is gained from years of experience. The rush of adrenaline is addicting in paddling, and with a little preparation and common sense, it can be safely managed without being destroyed.



# Paddling in Old Cullowhee? The WCU Canoe Slalom Brings It On!

By: Ben Kapity



\*\* photo provided by <http://www.thewesterncarolinajournalist.com/2011/09/08/sunny-weather-for-the-3rd-annual-old-cullowhee-canoe-slalom/>\*\*

Are you looking for a way to meet new recreation oriented friends or possibly want to work on your kayak, canoe, or stand up paddleboard skills? Then the Canoe Slalom in old Cullowhee is for you! The WCU hosted Canoe Slalom in old Cullowhee is a great event designed to show that there is a recreation potential in the area.

The actual event was created by the students and teachers from WCU in the PRM major as a fundraiser to help revitalize the old Cullowhee area. All proceeds from the slalom go to the funding of a river park. Such a river park could bring many more visitors to that area, which in turn would bring in business opportunities to serve all of the visitors. This year

\$405 was raised. \$155 of that amount was from a raffle, which was a new addition this year ran by a WCU alumni. Diamond Brand and NOC both made very generous donations for the raffle.

The event took place on September 8<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. I had signed up for the double open canoe category with my wife for only \$10, \$5 each. Gretchen and I arrived a little early to scope out the course and hopefully get a little practice in, as we were not able to go to the practice session the day before. We were not able to practice, but at least we saw how some people were running it so we could get an idea of what to do.

The course was designed in the shape of a big U starting and ending by the bridge. I had helped assemble it a few days earlier. It may sound easy going through different gates in a big U shape until you realize only one side of the gate is the proper entrance direction. Some of the gates are faced so that you have to paddle around to the other side before you can go through it. Some of the places are designed so that a figure eight in a canoe is required to properly enter the gates.

We listened to Dr. Maurice Phipps explain the rules and talk about the raffle and prizes. We then got our numbered shirt for the race and went back to get a few raffle tickets. We were fairly early in the list of people so we walked over the prepping area to get a

boat. We launched into the river, waited in queue for a few minutes and then paddled off on our first run! This was the first time that my wife and I had been in a canoe together. I was in the back doing the main steering. It was really interesting trying to maneuver a huge canoe like that around in circles to get through the gates in the correct order and direction. We finished and had an idea of how to do better for the next run.

After we got back to shore, we continued to watch how everyone else went through so as to learn how to improve. All of the watching combined with what we learned in our first run paid off because we cut off twenty seconds during our second and final run!

**\*\*CONTINUED ON PG. 23\*\***

*“A river park could bring many more visitors to that area, which in turn would bring in business opportunities ”*

# Panthertown Valley

By: Andy Anderson



Panthertown is my favorite place to go for a hike, followed by the Uwharrie National Forest. Panthertown has a unique atmosphere and the scenery is unmatched. The valley contains a network of hiking trails that can lead to various places, at least 8 large waterfalls along with many smaller ones scattered along creeks and streams, and 6700 acres of National Forest Service owned land. There are other aspects of Panthertown that you simply won't find anywhere else, such as the secluded sandy beaches along the bank of a swimming hole that has been made by a breathtakingly beautiful waterfall, mountain top views, sunrise and sunset views on the rock face, and much more.

I have hiked through the entire valley and I keep coming back to one spot in particular, Schoolhouse Falls and Little Green Mountain. Schoolhouse Falls is located at the bottom of Little Green Mountain, and is a beautiful and relaxing waterfall. This waterfall is very unique because of several things, you can walk behind the waterfall without getting wet, there is a swimming hole, there is a beautiful beach, there is a stream, it is on the main trail, and it has a beachfront campsite. I have stayed

here several times, but it is a very popular campsite, so if you plan to stay here you need to get to the site early in the day. To get to Little Green Mountain, I always walk to Schoolhouse Falls and straight up the hill. You will start to walk into a pine grove towards the top of the mountain, this is where I normally camp. On the other side of the pine grove, down a narrow trail, there is a clearing that takes you out onto an open rock face. From here you can see the entire valley, and this is the best spot to be at sunset. The sun sets directly across the valley from this spot and makes for a great picture.

My favorite memory and experience at Panthertown Valley was on my fifth or sixth trip. A friend and I, on the spur of the moment decided to pack in at nine o'clock one night and had to hike all the way to the pine grove on the top of Little Green Mountain, since the beach site was occupied at Schoolhouse Falls.

We set up camp and built a small fire, I was rocking back and forth in my crazy creek eating a hot dog when we heard thunder. It kind of puzzled us at first because we weren't sure if it was thunder or a gun.

After a few more rumbles and a flash or two of lightning, we knew there was a thunderstorm close. As we looked through the tree tops, all we could see were thousands of bright stars, we finished eating and walked out onto the rock face. Once we got out on the face, we still saw nothing but stars... which at this place is an amazing view. We decided to walk down to the sloped part of the face and stretch out on the warm rock and continue our conversation. When we got to the sloped area of the face, we discovered where the thunder and lightning was coming from... the valley below. We sat in amazement as we looked into a completely cloud covered valley, and saw and heard the thunderstorm that was taking place below us. We sat and watched the storm until it dissipated, and we couldn't believe we had just seen such an amazing thing take place.

Panthertown Valley is an amazing place to hike, camp, or recreate in general. The uniqueness of this place captures peoples' hearts and minds, and makes them come back... again and again. This place is worth checking out.

# Horses: Not a Hobby, a Lifestyle

By: Lindsey Newsom



My life has been focused on horses and equestrian sports since I was born. They are not just a hobby for me but a lifestyle. I began riding at the age of two and showing at four, and I still ride and compete today at twenty one years old. The activity is a family sport, as my mother has ridden since she was young, and her father was involved with horses throughout his life. My mom and I are extremely close because of horses. She taught me how to ride, and when I became advanced and had the goal of competing at the World's Championship Horse Show in Kentucky, she had me and my horse in a training and lesson program with a professional instructor. My mom and I have always traveled to horse shows together, competed together, cheered each other on, and helped each other with the hard, grueling work behind the scenes of the action.

A great deal of hard work and dedication is involved in equestrian sports. I have always had to help take care of the horses at home, and of course, ride and keep my own horse exercised for

competition. Horses have even been my source of income, and besides two waitressing jobs, have been the only type of work I have ever done. I began working at horse farms with my mom when I was eleven years old, feeding, watering, caring, grooming, and of course, shoveling manure. Once I was old enough to drive, several different farm owners hired me for horse care on a daily basis or when they were out of town. I have even had jobs over-night barn sitting. I live in Polk County, NC, and because it is such a "horse populated" area, an individual can make a living by working on horse farms. I may not make as much money as someone sitting in an office all day, but I can say that I am proud of the hard work and labor I have had to do all of my life.

The benefits of being a "horse person" definitely outweigh the hard work that has to be done. I have a horse named Rocky that is now twenty three years old who is just as important and special to me as a family member. He was my show horse, or "partner in

crime," for ten years of my horse riding career. He had several problems that my mom and I helped him to overcome when we first bought him. He had previously had eleven owners in thirteen years of his life, as no one wanted to try and help solve his issues. I think Rocky knows that we helped him and were making the effort no one had made before. Rocky and I have an extreme bond, like the ones "horse movies" are based on. Other people who have witnessed the way Rocky is attached to me comment on how bizarre it is. I will probably never have a bond like this with another horse in my life, so I am lucky to have this experience.

Anyone who decides to purchase a horse or horses needs to make sure he or she understands the responsibility that comes with them. As I said, horses are a lifestyle; you work on their schedule. They must be cared for 7 days a week, 365 days a year. If my family decides to go on vacation or go out of town, the first priority is to hire a qualified person to care for the horses while we are gone. If we go out to eat one night, we cannot leave until after feeding time, and we must be back early enough to turn the horses out in the pasture or clean the stalls, again. In my opinion, the hard labor is worth it. I love horses, riding, and competition. They are amazing animals that want to please their humans (most of the time). Horse riding is a fun and positive sport that I hope to be involved in for the rest of my life.

# A Whole New Perspective

By: Stephen Parsons

Currently in my third year at Western Carolina I am studying Parks & Recreation Management with a focus in community recreation. I am the youngest of four brothers and the third to study parks & recreation management at a college level. I thought recreation was kind of my thing. Growing up in Charleston all my life, I was always surrounded by beaches, tourists, shops, bars, you name it; they had it so many different types of recreation going on.

Like the rest of my family, sports was a major part of our lives; specifically soccer. The four of us played in our youth until we graduated from high school. After graduating from high school I pursued a college degree at Western Carolina. Yes, yes I know what you are thinking right now; why on earth are you at Western? Well, one of my brothers played football at Western and I would visit occasionally. I just valued the atmosphere and the change of scenery. When I graduated high school, I decided the hot humid weather of Charleston had done its toll on me; it's time for a change.

I came to Western as a freshman ready to declare as a Parks & Recreation Management major. I grew up as a big sports guy and thought that this would be fun and I would fit in just fine. Boy was I wrong. Where I come from, recreation is basically sports. I took a few of the PRM classes my freshman year and I said to myself, "What the heck is going on?" People sharing stories in class of back-

packing, kayaking, hiking, and climbing trips, and here I sit thinking, anyone watch that football game last night? I didn't live by any mountains or rivers; I didn't know what was being said. The only type of camping I knew growing up was renting a plot out and sleeping in a tent.

I would wake up dreading going to class as I felt like the odd man out. One day I went as far as contemplating that maybe this major is just not for me. As the next semester rolled by I enrolled in a more experiential class. Never have I been in a kayak or even thought of learning how to roll one (once I finally learned what that even meant). I finally started feeling like this was the right place for me to be. Once I dreaded going to class, I now embrace it.

I have never been the adventurous type but that has changed. Since then I have hiked, backpacked, kayaked, and climbed and so on. Once a scared lonesome freshman, I have now embraced it. Not only has this changed me, but I have met some great people on the way. None of this would have been possible if it wasn't for these people. Getting to know people in my major with experience was a benefit to me because I would learn new things and also build friendships.

I came to Western thinking I would just learn how to run youth programs at a recreation center but I find myself learning about different types of recreation that I never knew existed. Hiking to the peak

of Mt. Leconte has to be the highlight of being here. That's probably not saying much for those of you reading this, but where I come from, it's quite the accomplishment. Western has opened up my eyes to many new things. My good friend at Clemson is in the same major, and he comes to me saying how lucky I am. All they do is read, take notes and test on these things; while I am out actually doing it. Three years have transformed me into learning a whole new side of things.



[http://www.northcarolina.edu/campus\\_profiles/INST\\_WCU.php](http://www.northcarolina.edu/campus_profiles/INST_WCU.php)

# Hunting Tales

By: David Ludwig & Robert Owens

## David's Story

Being a hunter, there are many exciting adventures that can and will be experienced. You may not always get what you want out of a hunt but the experience itself is worthwhile. You learn many new skills such as gun safety and how to survive in the wilderness, these are skills you could take with you for the rest of your life and put to good use. So not only is hunting a very enjoyable sport, but it is beneficial in many ways to the participant. It is something great that everyone should try. So grab your gear and hit the woods! Maybe you too can have many experiences to create good memories such as the stories we will share below.

On a weekend in November of 2009, I decided to tag along with my dad and grandpa on a weekend hunting trip. We loaded up the trucks with all of our hunting gear and headed to a small cabin just outside of Ablemarle, NC. This is a place that I had been coming to for my entire life to hunt with my dad. He owned about 38 acres on a hillside, about a mile off the paved road. We were all big deer hunters and that was just what we were hoping to have success with this weekend.

We arrived that Friday night and soon headed to bed for an early rise the next morning. As the alarm clocks rang at five in the morning I was slow to exit my bed. I knew I had to get up and get ready so that we could all be in the stand before daylight. Dressed and ready to go, I headed to my tree-stand praying that today might be

the day I harvest a monster. In just about every sport however, there are some disappointments. Not having any luck that morning, we all returned to the house empty handed. No one saw any sign of a deer so we just had to wait until the afternoon to try our luck again.

After lunch and quite a long nap we all prepared ourselves for the woods again. I then hopped on my four-wheeler and headed yet again to my tree-stand. It had all the signs of a good evening ahead. There was no wind and it was just about the right temperature. As I climbed in my stand I just had a feeling that this could be an exciting hunt. After being situated in the stand I then checked my surroundings. Below me was a large field that we had planted with clover alongside a large river. To my right was a large patch of woods on a hillside where we had laid out some bait, otherwise known as deer -corn.

After sitting there for a good period of time I saw some movement down in the field. There were two deer all the way at the other end. I picked up my binoculars and studied the deer to see what they looked like. I could tell that none of them had horns and they weren't quite big enough. They were not what I was looking for but it was a good sign to see that the deer were moving. Later in the evening I had seen quite a few more deer in the field and two of them had made their way up to the bait pile. Still not meeting my requirements to harvest them, I hadn't decided to take a shot. They ate

for a while and then I watched them wonder off into the woods. It was starting to get dark and I was becoming more and more depressed because my hunt was about to come to an end and we would have to head home. Right as I was thinking that the hunt was a bust, I could see something move in the brush above the bait pile. It was definitely the biggest thing I had seen all night. I was just praying that it might make a move out of the brush so I could get a good look and to my luck it did.

As the deer stepped out I could tell it was a "shooter." Although not the biggest deer I had ever seen, it was definitely something worth bringing back to camp. I looked through my binoculars and saw that it had 8 points. As I picked up my gun my heart started pounding and I could feel the adrenaline rushing through my veins. I was so scared not to be able to make a good shot because this deer would just not come down to the bait for some reason. After waiting a good 15 minutes I knew I had to take my next shot opportunity before it got dark. It was not a good angle because of the hillside so I was forced to rest my arm on the side of the stand to elevate my gun.

I could see the big buck in my scope and I put the crosshairs right on his shoulder. I took one big breath and pulled the trigger. Once the smoke cleared I could see the deer run off into the woods. I was not sure that I made a good shot at all.

Not being confident I got down out of the stand to go check it out. I found no signs of blood or any bullet contact. This is just something a lot of hunters have to face sometimes. I thought my hunt was definitely over but I was in for a real surprise as to what happened next. Knowing that my grandfather was hunting up the hill from me I did not want to mess him up so I decided to get back in my stand and wait until dark.

Not 15 seconds after I had returned to the stand I was surprised by another movement on the same hillside. The same deer I had just shot at took a few steps out and directly to the bait pile this time. I just knew that I was given a second chance for a reason and had better take advantage of it. I had a much better angle for the shot this time so I could steady my gun very easily. Again, I placed the crosshairs on his shoulder and pulled the trigger. This time he hit the ground and I had never been more excited. As I walked over this time to go view my trophy I knew this was going to be a very exciting story to tell when I got back home.

### Robert's Story

Deer hunting is something I look forward to every fall. I especially enjoy remembering and sharing a favorite hunting experience, because it was the time that I actually shot a deer and was hoping to bring the meat home. I was also spending time with a very good friend, Lucas, who was killed last summer in Iraq. It was a cold memorable December morning, with a foot and a half of snow on the ground, Lucas and I were freezing and tired but we were in the forest enjoying what we love to

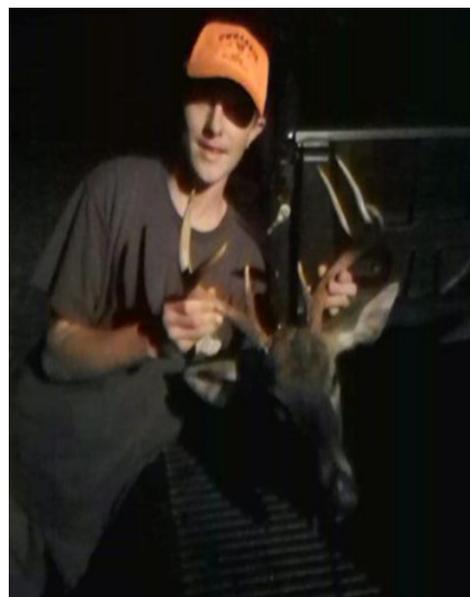
do, hunting. We had just arrived at the deer stand and immediately began listening to the radio for the announcer to say that the dogs had been released and that we could begin hunting deer. We anxiously awaited confirmation and after what seemed like a very long time, we finally heard the news we had been waiting for.

Our deer stand was on top of a ridge overlooking a swamp like valley. Since snow covered the ground, it was difficult to hear the dogs until they were very close to us. As we were standing there in the knee high frozen snow, all of a sudden I heard a yelp from one of the dogs. Since the yelps and howls of the dogs were becoming louder and more intense, I suspected that the dogs were running a deer. I was very excited and expected that we would see a deer pop out of the trees any second. Lucas started shooting at the deer, which was running down the other side of the ridge, into the valley. The dogs continued running the deer and we were following them. I also began shooting at the deer. We thought we had shot the deer, but it ran deeper into the woods, out of our sight. We quickly went down the ridge, across the stream, and into the valley to track the deer. As we walked into the valley, we finally began seeing blood trails. However, we saw multiple trails and initially we did not know why. We then realized that the dog's feet were bleeding and we could not tell the difference in the dog's trail and the deer's trail. We followed many of the blood trails, but we eventually made our way to the deer. As we expected, the deer had been killed. However, to our surprise and disappointment, the dogs had taken full advantage of

getting to the deer first and had begun wolfing down our deer. So, of course our plans changed, and we did not take the deer from that hunting trip home.

These are just some of the memorable moments we have had in this sport. Even if you haven't ever participated, it may be something you might want to check into, who knows, maybe you can develop memories such as the ones that we have shared today.

***"Being a hunter, there are many exciting adventures that can and will be experienced. You may not always get what you want out of a hunt but the experience itself is worthwhile"***



# Importance of being prepared for Hiking

By: Lance Flowers



\*\*photo provided by <http://www.theoutdoorsguy.com/tag/thru-hiking/>\*\*

Recently a friend and I went hiking but we weren't able to get out into the woods until 5pm. We didn't plan well for the hike; we misjudged how long we would be in the woods and the only thing I brought were the clothes I was wearing, two bottles of water and a flashlight. My friend was thankful that I brought my flashlight as we would have had a really hard time hiking at night. During our hike it started raining and the temperature began dropping really fast, so by the time we made it out of the woods it was dark, in the low forties and we were wet. We learned that we needed to plan better ahead of time.

Anytime you are planning a hiking trip you should plan for every situation for being out in woods. You should always plan according to the weather, knowing this is essential to planning a successful hike. If you are unaware of the conditions then you can't prepare

properly. Bringing plenty of food and water is a necessity! Footwear is really important because if you wear the wrong footwear it can be a horrible experience; a good idea is to bring boots and a pair of other shoes that dry easily, just in case you have to cross a creek or river. While hiking you need keep track of the time because not doing so could leave you in the woods after dark. Knowing the time is extremely helpful and being unprepared for the hike out of the woods is a dangerous situation, especially at night. If I had been able to keep track of the time I would have known when to turn back before it got dark and cold.

When going on a hike, plan ahead so that you can have a safe and enjoyable experience in the woods. The old saying goes "It's better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it", so it's important not to go into the woods unprepared. If you do then

you could end up in a situation like me or even worse! Always expect the unexpected and plan accordingly. You want to have the best experience you can while out hiking and one of the tools in your disposal is a well put together plan.



[http://www.123rf.com/photo\\_7376248\\_hiking-equipment-rucksack-boots-and-slipping-pad.html](http://www.123rf.com/photo_7376248_hiking-equipment-rucksack-boots-and-slipping-pad.html)

# My Most Recent Adventure

By: Clint Holcomb

I recently made a fly fishing trip out to a Great Smoky's stream called Straight Fork. Out of all of the streams and creeks that I have visited in the magnificent Smoky's, this one is by far my favorite. I ended up taking a minute or two and just took in my surroundings and caught myself in a fairly deep thought. The stream was extremely secluded, and rarely do you ever come across any other anglers, because of this seclusion. It makes the surroundings of the stream look ten times more amazing. The stream is roaring with ice-cold, clear water. This water is home to many different species of insects and a couple of different strands of mountain trout.

The first thing that catches my eye when I see a stream or river is the water. What kind of water is it I ask myself? Is it clear and free flowing, or is it a tad murky and dam controlled? Straight Fork is classified as clear and free flowing, being somewhat shallower and rockier than bigger dam controlled rivers. Its stretches are made up of long shallow flats or skinny plunge pools. As I waded alongside the stream I could see Trout feeding under the surface thanks to the polarized glasses I was wearing. Most of the Trout that I could see were in the eight to twelve inch range, which is about average for the trout in this stream. Also I could see insects beginning to hatch off of the water. There was a prolific hatch of Midges coming off, they were very small and were yellow, which indicated that they

were yellow sulfurs. The rest of the insects rising to the surface were slightly larger Caddis and Mayflies, both were of a yellow hue as well. As I walked along the bank, I also picked up some rocks to see if I could find what bugs were still in their immature nymph stage. There were many small Mayflies and several cased Caddis. Sometimes I would get lucky and find a large golden Stonefly, ranging from one to two and a half inches long. These large insects are what the bigger fish like to feed on and, to me, are the most amazing aquatic insect. They have a long, slender abdominal section with two tails that can range up to two inches a piece. Then they have a set of three wings above their thorax with a really neat mottled oak appearance. Also their heads are like that of a Hammerhead shark, flat and very wide with large antennas protruding from each side, and they have three out-of-proportion legs on either side of their thorax, which resemble the legs of a wolf spider. The next thing that catches my eye is the

stream or river structure. Straight Fork is not in a gorge; therefore the surroundings of the stream are relatively flat.

The next thing that catches my eye is the stream or river structure. Straight Fork is not in a gorge; therefore the surroundings of the stream are relatively flat. Along both sides of the river, the banks are green with grass and are lined with beautiful rhododendrons. The trail-side of the stream is completely flat while the opposing side is probably at a thirty-five percent grade uphill. The streambed is made mostly of pebbles and small rocks, with large boulders breaking the surface every couple yards or so.

The sounds that I heard while visiting this amazing National Park stream were minimal. I could hear crickets from time to time, but the velocity of the water pouring off of the large boulders every couple yards was mainly the only thing that I heard. But that sound is one of the main contributors as to why I love being out on the water. There are no people,

there is no cell service, and there are no distractions. It is just me and nature.

\*\*photo provided by <http://www.flickr.com/photos/esywlkr/5159400491/>\*\*



## Be Nice and Smile! By: Nick Marino



Growing up as a kid the first golden rule I ever learned was to treat others as you would want them to treat you and I bet I was not the only one who was taught this. Even if this news is new to you it's still not too shabby a way to go about living your life. Anyway, as professionals of the outdoors most, if not all of us are part of the service industry; yes along with food servers and hotel desk staff. What separates us from our fellow service brethren is that we are often required to put in way more "face time" with our clientele base; meaning that we are a more integral part of the service we are providing. We can really make or break someone's entire experience! Duh right? That huge detail is easily overlooked at times. I know that personally as a guide the everyday grind and repetition can really start to wear you down and possibly even make you numb to the interactions you are having with your guests. Telling the same corny joke that is guaranteed a few chuckles or pointing out the same plants can definitely get to you after a point. Treat others as you wish to be treated. Do you remember your

first time down a river, zipping through the trees, day of camp, and so on? Do you remember how you felt; nervous, excited, awe struck, gripped with fear? So although as a guide this may be your "umpteenth" time doing something never forget to put yourself into the mind of your guest and connect to what they are experiencing and make it the experience they are looking for!

As I stated just a few seconds ago, depending on how quickly you read, I have most certainly fallen victim to the numbness that work can bring and have acted impersonal to guests as I simply went through the motions. So I have an idea to propose; let's take an oath. Think you can handle it? I knew you could, I just had to double check. Just think of my voice in your head and repeat after me; for those who have no idea who I am just think Morgan Freeman

*"I as an outdoor professional do happily swear that I will do my very best to provide a quality recreational experience to those under my guidance through professional actions, a positive yet realistic de-*

*meanor, and an understanding of how they are feeling. I will not only act this way towards those I call participants but those I call peer and coworker so that together we can strive to be the best possible. Even when the day has been long and rough and my "umpteenth" time has come and gone at the very least I will be nice and smile".*

Way to go! Now that you have taken this oath, please take the arm of your preference and place it in front of your upper torso in a diagonal position. Next, reach behind the shoulder your hand is now pointing at and begin to pat until satisfaction is reached and smile!

It sounds funny but the truth is despite the customer service training we may receive in our jobs only we can hold ourselves accountable for the treatment of those we interact with both at work and in life. How do you want to be remembered? I will be the guy having fun and sporting a big grin on my face; but remember you did just take an oath.

# The Big One

By: Jordon Grant



I was sitting on the bank of the Tuckaseegee, with flooded waders and a bloody leg, thinking to myself, “How did I get myself in this situation?” My truck was on the other side of the river, and there were no roads that crossed the river for a mile upstream or downstream. Looking back on that day, I’m glad I decided not to walk to the truck on the road. Instead, I wiped off as much of the blood as I could with a leaf, put my waders back on and hopped back in the river.

I immediately tripped on a rock and flooded my waders again; just my luck. I stood back up and started back across the river toward a slew of rocks on the far bank. I looked down to make sure I didn’t fall again, and heard a huge splash. I looked up in time to see water splashing in all directions from what appeared to be a thrown rock. I looked around, and not seeing anyone, I continued my stumbling journey back to my truck.

I made it about halfway

across, and then saw it. The largest brown trout I’ve ever seen, in the exact same spot where I thought a rock was thrown. It was rising to a cloud of hatching bugs that floated above the river like the seeds of a blown dandelion. I quickly opened up my chest pack and retrieved my dry fly box. Staring at the fish the entire time, I did my best to tie on a caddis imitation.

My first cast landed a few feet short of my intended target, so I let my line and fly float downstream so as not to spook the fish on my back cast. I tried casting one more time, and the fly landed exactly where I wanted it to. The big brown didn’t give a second thought as it inhaled the fly, and I set the hook with a zing of line coming off the water.

They say you always remember your firsts. Well, my first large brown trout was the fish fight of my life. I’ve caught many fish above 50 lbs., but can’t remember the fights in detail like I can for

this fish. It took a full 5 minutes to get the fish to the net. I’ve never seen a more beautiful specimen in my entire life, and will treasure that fish and the opportunity I had to catch it for the rest of my life.

# Leave No Trace - LNT

By: Spencer Sharrits



<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsorce/CubScouts/resources/LeavenoTrace.aspx>

When in the backcountry it is important to follow a few things to ensure that the beauty of the backcountry doesn't disappear. Leave No Trace is an organization that tries to raise awareness about the importance of the environment, and teaches people what they can do to help keep it the same for everyone to enjoy. People that don't follow LNT guidelines are the people that you see cooking in their tents, or throwing their empty trail mix bag on the ground. Leave No Trace can be broken down into

**Seven** principals.

**First**, plan ahead and prepare. This is important to a trip because of the need to know any regulations or concerns for the area that is being visited. The group or individual should be prepared for extreme conditions, including weather, hazards and emergencies. Also if it is a large group they should plan on splitting into smaller groups.

The **Second** LNT principal is travel and camp on durable surfaces; this is to ensure that the land that we use does not get over used. Also the group should camp at least 200 feet from streams or lakes.

**Third** is to dispose of waste properly, this is done by packing out everything that the group took in. This includes toilet paper, wrappers to food, hygiene products and lastly any food that was not eaten. Also solid human waste should be buried in a six to eight inches hole that is at least 200 feet from camp and or water source.

**Fourth** leave what you find where you find it. This is important because everything is in a location because it needs to be to help the ecosystem work properly. The last thing is that it is important that you don't take any rocks, plants or other natural objects out of their homes.

The **Fifth** principal is to minimize campfire impacts, some people think that you shouldn't even have a fire but it is nice when you're out there. So there are a few ways you can build a fire and be careful to the environment you're in. The fire should be small in a proper fire pit, ring or mound, also use small twigs that already lie on the ground.

The **Sixth** principal is to respect the wildlife; this should be followed for your safety. They are called wildlife because they are

wild and we can't predict what they are going to do. The best way to protect one's self is to stay a good distance away and never follow or track animals. Also you should never feed a wild animal, and at night you should hang your food in a tree, this is commonly known as a bear hang. This is important because it should be at least 200 feet from camp, at least 15 feet up in a tree and 6 feet away from the trunk of the tree. This will hopefully be out of the reach for any hungry animal such as a bear.

The **Seventh** and last LNT principal is to be considerate of other visitors. This one is knowing and understanding how to be nice to other campers by not camping on someone else's camp site, using soft voices so not to disrupt the sounds of the woods, and trail courtesies such as up-hill hikers have the right of way.

If everyone practices good LNT then there would be less negative effects on the trail systems and people would be able to use them for a longer time. Whenever I'm in the backcountry it always hurts me to see piles of trash sitting in the corner of a shelter or even worse, when you are at the top of a mountain looking out at the view and you see at your feet someone's lunch half eaten on the rock. If you are able to carry food into the woods you should be able to carry the empty package out (rule #3)

## “There is nothing to do in Cullowhee?!”

By: Matt Harshman

When walking around campus I often hear, more than I should, that there is nothing to do in Cullowhee. Well, if you like malls, fancy stores, and a large party scene, this may be true. But for many of us, this is completely wrong. We do not have enough time in the day to participate in the multitude of activities available to us in the area that surrounds our campus. You can hike to a waterfall in the morning; kayak the Tuck in the afternoon and then boulder outside after that. Could you really do all of that in one day? Definitely. It may take some driving and little bit of effort and creativity, but there is absolutely no reason that you should ever be bored around here. We live in one of the best areas around for outdoor recreation, which means that:



Eternity Hole

Rumbling Bald



“There is everything to do in Cullowhee!”

## Paddling in Old Cullowhee? Cont. from pg. 12

We knew that we were nowhere near first place, but were very happy with our score nonetheless. It ended up that we were in eighth place for the actual competition, but I think that it was a great score considering that we had never been in a canoe together before and that neither of us had ever done anything similar. The only thing left was the raffle and the cleanup. We cleaned up in the raffle! Between my wife and I, we won 4 of the 9 raffle prizes. We may not have been the top paddlers that day but we still left as winners!

Everyone chipped in with the break down and clean up and it was all done very quickly. Gretchen and I went with a few others to put away the boats and everything was done. All in all it was a great experience and I think next year will be even better. I can't wait to bring try to place in the next one!

