Located within northeast Alaska, the designated reach of the Ivishak WSR totals 80 miles. The Ivishak Wild and Scenic River (WSR) is classified as Wild (the classification that applies to rivers with the least amount of development along their banks), and possesses scenery, recreation, fish, and hydrology outstandingly remarkable values (ORV) – each dependent on flow and/or water quality – along its entire length. From its source at the Continental Divide of the Brooks Range Mountains, the Ivishak River flows north and west beyond its designated portion until the river’s waters eventually reach the Arctic Ocean, just east of Prudhoe Bay.

In 2020, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska Region (FWS-AK) focused effort on identifying wild and scenic river values for the Ivishak WSR and six other rivers the agency administers or co-administers in Alaska. (See article by Cassie Thomas in this RMS Journal issue.) The Ivishak WSR and two other FWS-administered rivers (Sheenjek, and Wind WSRs) flow from within Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (Arctic Refuge, Refuge). North to south the Arctic Refuge extends 200 miles – from the Arctic coast, across the tundra plain, over the glacier-capped peaks of the Brooks Range Mountains, and into the

(continued on page 10)
We hope you’ll join us with a river hoot or holler as we both learn from, and put behind us, a year like no other. While we look forward to a post-COVID new sense of normal, we are not there yet, and will likely find that we will be reminded of 2020 for a long time. Our fundamental ways of communicating and doing will be changed permanently by what we’ve adopted in order to cope (i.e. accommodate the pandemic response) — there will no doubt be silver linings and unanticipated positives resulting from the disease which has rocked our world.

2020 called on our river experience to respond to the conditions and navigate around the obstacles, appreciating where we’ve been but never looking back upstream, in order to focus on what is ahead! In the absence of federal guidance and thanks to awesome, seasoned river managers, RMS hosted as many as three meetings, workshops, and presentations each month; provided an otherwise unavailable nexus of district/state, county and federal discussions about how rivers were being closed … then opened … and managed through unprecedented levels of demand. We have recently followed up to continue the dialogue, sharing how folks are planning for the upcoming season.

We have rekindled a connection with the outfighting community (thankfully), whose work toward RMS’ bright future.

RMS President’s Corner

See you on the river!

This year started just like the last year with a float on the Verde River. It was just the two of us, along with several pairs of ducks and geese, many phoebes, woodpeckers, and a free-form squad of red-tailed hawks and ravens playing in the sky above. It was the same day, same stretch of river, just one notable difference. Last year we encountered a great horned owl and thought it interesting that the nocturnal creature perched for some time, watching us as we watched it from the eddy below. At the time, we thought it an unusual and cool sighting. Perhaps that memorable encounter was foreshadowing what would unknowingly, yet certainly become an unusual year (to say the least).

You never really know what your run is going to be until you push off from shore. The RMS team started 2020 with a plan; working hard to put the finishing touches on the Symposium, line out the River Training Center courses and other priorities. We thought we knew the run. A few months into the year as we continued downstream, we dropped into a rapid with unknown and unexpected turbulence. Read and run; that’s what happened as the RMS crew navigated unfamiliar waters. Through the leadership of our Executive Director and staff, a dedicated Board of Directors and volunteer members kept the RMS boats upright and moved forward with confidence and commitment.

RMS has worked so hard this past year to provide support and resources to address relevant and timely issues. We hosted forums and workshop discussions to share resources and expertise on pandemic-related closures, re-opening procedures and associated visitor use management challenges. We collaborate with consultant and river professional to address workplace discrimination and harassment. We opened our eyes wider to examine how the work we do can help break down the barriers to equality and inclusion for all people. There’s always more to learn and room to grow. The challenge is upon us to stay on mission as we set our hands to the good work that is supported by good science, justice, and community.

The last three years as your President have been a challenging and rewarding experience. This has been the culmination of a near-30-year relationship with this great organization. RMS gave to me so much professionally and personally, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of a workforce that ensures that resources and services continue to be of value to RMS members and partners.

Please join me in welcoming and supporting the Executive Committee who, along with our outstanding Executive Director Risa Shimoda, will guide us in this new era in RMS history. New officers Judy Culver, President and Shannon Bassista, Vice President will serve with returning board members Helen Clough, Secretary, Rob White, Treasurer, and Emma Lord, Chapter Liaison. This group brings new perspectives and ideas, an exceptional commitment to RMS and deep appreciation for the protection, management, and enjoyment of rivers and wild places. Thanks to you all for your leadership and adventurous spirit!

Lastly, let me remind you all that the greatest and most important asset of the River Management Society is its members. Wishing you the best in the days and years to come. &

With gratitude

Linda Jalbert
RMS President (2017-2020)

Winter 2020
2021-2023 National RMS Officers

The River Management Society is proud to announce the newly elected officers who will usher our society into a new era.

President — Judy Culver

Throughout her career, Judy has had deep connections to rivers and to RMS. At 18, she received a Maine Guides license and also guided in New York state. After two years of guiding she shifted to the Army and upon leaving active duty, headed to Alaska to spend a few years guiding and exploring rivers between classes at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Her first federal job was in 2000 as a seasonal Dinosaur National Monument River Ranger where she would return a few years later to manage the river program. She broke into the field of Outdoor Recreation Planning in 2007 at Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, managing the eligible Paria River — a segment that is never truly “boatable” but has many of the same challenges as boatable rivers. In 2011, Judy returned to managing boatable rivers in Idaho (Clearwater River and Lolo Creek, Arizona (Verde River), and currently New Mexico (Rio Grande and Rio Chama). Judy is the Assistant Field Manager for the BLM Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, and oversees the recreation program across the Taos Field Office.

Judy’s contributions to RMS have included organizing and hosting a Southwest Chapter trip on the Yampa River in Dinosaur National Monument, past symposia committee membership, and volunteering as the RMS Merchandise Coordinator and Purchase Coordinator for several years. In 2018, she served as Chair of the Marketing Committee for the Vancouver symposium, as well as running the RMS store and working with the Silent Auction fundraiser. In 2019, Judy received “Outstanding Contribution to the River Management Society” for these contributions and more.

Welcome Judy! Thank you for your commitment to RMS and for leading us into the new decade.

Vice President — Shannon Bassista

Shannon moved from Maryland to Idaho to pursue a master’s degree in Resource, Recreation and Tourism at the University of Idaho and graduated in 2003. A master’s resource project that involved a visitor survey to Owyhee River boaters was her first taste of multi-day boating, and fed her passion and love for rivers — plus, exciting backcountry opportunities kept her in Idaho to pursue a meaningful lifestyle and career. In June 2004, Shannon started a permanent career as a Recreation Technician on the South Fork of the Snake River with the Bureau of Land Management in eastern Idaho. For the last 16 years, she has worked managing public lands including rivers, sand dunes, remote landscapes and wild lands for public benefit and natural resource management.

Shannon works at the BLM Idaho State Office in Boise as a state lead in the recreation program. This job requires dedication to the diverse field of recreation, managing staff, understanding budgets and how to track down funding opportunities, good communication between upper level managers and field staff, and disseminating information through all layers of bureaucracy.

Shannon has been a member of RMS for 16 years, and brings along great energy and enthusiasm for the care, protection, and enjoyment of rivers. She has committed to working hard to continue the great RMS programs and will strive to find new opportunities for RMS members. Welcome aboard Shannon!

Rob White, Treasurer

Rob recently retired from Colorado Parks and Wildlife where he served as the Park Manager for the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) for the past 20 years. His career started as a seasonal ranger at Rocky Mountain National Park. During those three years, he also would substitute teach math, biology, environmental science and natural resource-related classes in Colorado and Michigan.

Shannon has been the President of RMS for 16 years, and brings along great energy and enthusiasm for the care, protection, and enjoyment of rivers. She has committed to working hard to continue the great RMS programs and will strive to find new opportunities for RMS members. Welcome aboard Shannon!

Rob White

In 1995, Rob started guiding trips for the Sierrab Club National Outings program. The first trip was a week-long hiking trip in Rocky Mountain National Park and he’s been guiding trips there and other places ever since. Rob continues to lead backcountry ski, bicycle, and wilderness hiking trips in several national parks and USFS wilderness areas.

During his time at the AHRA, Rob developed a deep appreciation for all of the professional development and connections that RMS provided through its RMS Journal, workshops, symposia and many interactions with river rangers and river management professionals from throughout the country. Nearly six years ago, Rob jumped into RMS leadership as the Southwest Chapter President, during which time the Chapter hosted several river trips and two River Ranger Rendezvous. In addition to his volunteer work with RMS, he serves on the boards of the Central Colorado Conservancy, Greater Arkansas River Nature Association (GARNA) and the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (PROST) for the City of Salida, Colorado. Welcome Rob, and thank you for jumping in again!

Helen Clough, Secretary

Helen retired in 2013 after almost 40 years in federal service working for Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service - National Wildlife Refuge System. During her FWS career, she traveled across the country visiting every regional office and teaching over 1,000 service employees about refuge planning at the National Conservation Training Center. Helen came to RMS when she was tasked with river planning for rivers within refuges in western Alaska in 1990. Helen has served with RMS in many capacities over the years. She was on the RMS Board as Treasurer from 2013-2014, President from 2015-2017, and Secretary from 2018 to present. She has also played a critical role in the success of the past three RMS Training Symposia, and is the program chair for the 2021 virtual symposium.

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Time to Register!

Registration is now open for the 2021 RMS Training Symposium — From Mountain Creeks to Metro Canals — presented by River Management Society in partnership with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). This will be hosted as a virtual event April 12-15 via the Zoom platform.

As a reminder for members and colleagues, particularly those new to RMS: The symposium is a unique national gathering of students, scientists, agency field staff (e.g., rangers), planners and river trail leaders interested in the health of rivers as the platform for outdoor adventure and fitness, economic development, science-based learning and sharing.

True to the quality and variety of past symposium programs, we will offer training workshops, presentations and storytelling which represent skills needed, experience valued and curiosity shared by and among river professionals. We hope that by listening to topic experts, sharing input and chatting between sessions we will be reminded of how lucky we are to have the responsibility to protect and manage the arteries of our landscapes for all who care to visit.

SWAG

New for 2021, and a terrific reason to sign up during the early registration period (by February 28, 2021) — Richmond Regional Tourism and Virginia DCR are providing a special “thank you” to the first 100 full week registrants (including those who carried over their registration from 2020) — a waterproof camera pouch, and items commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program (dry bag, water bottle, coaster and pen). An RMS logo decal will be included as well!
Program Structure
The program begins with several pre-symposium events on Monday and ends Thursday. To accommodate people joining from across the country, sessions will begin at 1:00 p.m. eastern (that’s 10:00 a.m. pacific) on Monday and 11:00 a.m. eastern the rest of the week. Program sessions will end at 5:00 p.m. eastern with some events continuing beyond on Tuesday and Wednesday. If you live on the east coast, plan to have your mornings generally available for other activities and your attendance will extend into the early evening. If you are on the west coast, you’ll start early and be done by mid-afternoon. Those of you in the rest of the country fit somewhere in between. And, the few of us in Alaska (or Hawaii) have to be early risers for a few days!

The program is similar to the original program planned for 2020 in Richmond with most speakers staying with us, though they were asked to shorten presentations to fit into the virtual format and to figure out how field activities could be included.

Program tracks include:
- Rural and Mountain Rivers – Management Issues and Science
- Urban Rivers – Urban Renewal, Infrastructure, Issues and Economics
- Management Technology Tools
- Policy and Practice – State and Federal River Management Legislation, Policies and Systems
- Partnerships and Community-Building
- Water and River Corridor Trails
- Visual Resource Management

Over 60 presentations are scheduled with up to four concurrent sessions offered on Monday and three the rest of the event. A Visual Resource Workshop similar to that held at the Boise Symposium in 2016 will begin on Monday and continue as a concurrent track Tuesday through Thursday. Speakers represent state, federal and local agencies, colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, consultants and private businesses involved with rivers and river management.

Continuing Education Credits
Most sessions will offer continuing education credits. American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) credits are provided courtesy of the Virginia Chapter. Credits for the American Planning Association (APA) and National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) will also be offered for select sessions by our partnership with American Trails.

Monday’s pre-symposium sessions will consist of four tracks:
- Visual Resource Management Workshop
- Adding Depth to Understanding Diversity in the Workplace Workshop
- Drone Mapping/GIS Workshop, and
- Policy and Practice sessions related to Wild and Scenic Rivers, planning and construction in river corridors.

Zoom Format Information
The overall format will consist of 4 main Zoom “rooms.” The main Zoom lobby will be used for plenary sessions and will be available the rest of the symposium for interaction with our sponsors, technical trouble shooting, informal meetings and gatherings using the breakout room feature. The lobby will be a general gathering spot for information. Concurrent sessions will be held in three additional Zoom rooms. Most sessions will be for one hour followed by a 15-minute break. Each day there will also be a one-hour break. Meeting rooms will remain open during all breaks so participants can continue discussions, ask questions, break into small groups – the virtual equivalent of activities we would conduct during breaks at in-person meetings.

We will be providing the Guidebook app to those who pay for at least one full day to aid in planning, tracking and taking notes on the sessions you attend while learning and building your nationwide river and watershed management networks. The full app used on a smart phone will have all the same functions as it did at the Vancouver symposium. There is also a website version that participants can use to link to sessions, find program details, etc. We anticipate that most of us will use the phone app for finding sessions and our larger screens for attending. The app will also be used to notify participants of any last minute changes.

Tuesday - Program Highlights
Tuesday sessions include an opening plenary “From Sewer to Park: Transforming a Metro River” presented by Ralph Hambrick of the James River Scenic Advisory Committee and Nathan Burrell of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Concurrent sessions include the Visual Resource Workshop, Partnerships and Community Building sessions, Management Technology Tools sessions, Urban Rivers – Urban Renewal, Infrastructure, Issues and Economics sessions, Rural and Mountain Rivers – Management Issues and Science. Speakers will showcase projects from the Boise River in Idaho to the Red River in Kentucky to the James River which flows through the heart of Richmond.

Thursday’s concurrent sessions include the following tracks: Visual Resource Management, Management Technology Tools, Partnerships and Community-Building, Water and River Corridor Trails, and Visual Resource Management. Technical sessions will focus on fisheries and water topics. Two sessions entitled “Regional Renewal and Riverfronts” will showcase the successes of the Friends of the Lower Anacostia River. Several water trails presentations with highlights of successful approaches to water trail development and management. The day will end with a virtual Richmond walking and history tour!

Thursday - Program Highlights
Thursday’s concurrent sessions include the following tracks: Visual Resource Management, Management Technology Tools, Partnerships and Community-Building, Water and River Corridor Trails, and Visual Resource Management. Technical sessions will focus on fisheries and water topics. Two sessions entitled “Regional Renewal and Riverfronts” will showcase the successes of the Friends of the Lower Anacostia River. Several water trails presentations with highlights of successful approaches to water trail development and management. The day will end with a virtual Richmond walking and history tour!

We hope you’ll join us!
River System.

the values that made the Ivishak WSR eligible for designation, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 to “protect and enhance” ultimately to ensure FWS would continue to meet mandates of findings, determine additional river value characteristics, and July, 2020 float trip was planned to investigate accuracy of initial ORVs, but the team identifying agency resource information for describing the characteristics of Refuge staff field efforts over the decades provided detailed workshop provided by RMS River Training Center earlier these varied and dynamic lands encompassing five ecosystems and thousands of unnamed waterways are strikingly vast. Refugestaff field efforts over the decades provided detailed agency resource information for describing the characteristics of the Sheenjek and Wind WSRs’ ORVs, but the team identifying

And then a global pandemic happened.

Let’s be clear: conducting an Arctic field project in any given summer demands expert wilderness survival skills in extreme environmental conditions and capability to conduct complex logistical planning – but special considerations for field work during the pandemic further shaped preparations for the Ivishak float trip effort. Guided by intent to prioritize the safety of family, neighbors, colleagues, Tribal and community partners to slow the spread and impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the team met rigorous FWS-Alaska pre-approval processes for field projects by devising logistics that eliminated access through rural communities to prevent risk of virus transmission, and instead used the Dalton Highway immediately to the east of the Refuge boundary for most approach and egress needs (the feasibility of road access for the take-out, rather than aircraft access, makes the Ivishak WSR unique compared to other wild and scenic rivers in Arctic NWR and on the North Slope of Alaska). The team also developed a safety plan that incorporated COVID-safe practices into the field project plan by opting for travel by packraft, allowing each team member to be self-contained with supplies and equipment, to maintain strict social distancing measures. In fact, what seemed to be barriers turned out to be the keys to a successful field project. Foreseeing the challenges of using solo boats to remaining a cohesive group, it turns out the use of packrafts enhanced our ability to intimately explore the nooks and crannies of the Ivishak River, report back to the group each packrafts.

those extraordinary characteristics of the river. Understanding of these authentic descriptive characteristics of the Ivishak WSR contributed directly to a FWS-AK WSR values summary report. The report’s contents will help Arctic Refuge to focus management decisions around maintaining WSR characteristics, and to consider future management direction for rivers, ensuring the Ivishak (and Sheenjek, and Wind WSRs) remain superlative contributions to the National Wild and Scenic River System. Jennifer Reed works as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Use Manager and is the FWS IWSRCC Committee Representative.

Friends of Alaska Refuges Membership Meeting

March 16, 2021
5:00pm Alaska / 9:00 pm Eastern
Join this monthly meeting!

Explore the Wild and Scenic Rivers of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges with the US Fish & Wildlife Service’s river specialist – Jen Reed.

This program will take place via Zoom. Details will be available in March through the Friends of Alaska website (http://alaskarefugefriends.org/). Follow the March Membership Meeting link; no advance-registration requirement.

Presentations are recorded and can be viewed from the website after the event.

Want more views of the Ivishak Wild and Scenic River? Follow Arctic Refuge on Facebook (www.facebook.com/arcticnationalwildliferefuge) and browse our video album for Ivishak WSR footage. If you like what you see there, keep your eyes peeled for more FWS social media throughout 2021 that will celebrate all three of the designated WSRs within the Arctic Refuge’s boundary during the Arctic Refuge 60th Anniversary Celebration.
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) administrators or co-administers seven Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs) in Alaska. These rivers were designated by Congress in October 1980, pursuant to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA, P.L. 96-487). Like the other WSRs designated by ANILCA, FWS’s seven WSRs were deemed eligible for designation based on their free-flowing character and outstanding values. Such values were identified by teams of Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) employees, most of whom were Outdoor Recreation Planners, in field surveys conducted in the 1970s. These BOR staff focused mainly on the rivers’ scenic and recreational values, as little information had yet been compiled by the federal government about other potential values, including natural and cultural values.

Thirty-nine years later, it had become clear that the descriptions of the designated rivers’ outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) from BOR’s 1970s reconnaissance surveys were not adequate to ensure that FWS would continue to be able to fulfill the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act’s (WSRA, P.L. 90-542) mandate to “protect and enhance” these values, which made the rivers eligible for designation based on their free-flowing character and outstanding values. Such values were identified by teams of Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) employees, most of whom were Outdoor Recreation Planners, in field surveys conducted in the 1970s. These BOR staff focused mainly on the rivers’ scenic and recreational values, as little information had yet been compiled by the federal government about other potential values, including natural and cultural values.

During the workshop, attendees were given a brief overview of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and then set to work applying ORV criteria to the potential values included in each WSR’s resource assessment. The teams kept careful notes of their deliberations so the rationale for including or excluding each resource value from the ORV list would be documented. For resources determined to be ORVs, any flow or water quality conditions necessary to support the value were also described. Teams presented their preliminary findings to each other during the workshop, which further helped them refine their decisions.

After the in-person workshop, it was evident that some teams had lacked enough representation by certain resource experts to enable them to make final decisions concerning their ORVs. For two rivers located in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the Sheenjek and Wind, the decision was made to hold additional intensive half-day workshops in Spring 2020. Due to the developing Covid-19 pandemic, these workshops were held virtually. For another Arctic NWR river, the Ivishak, staff determined that there was insufficient field knowledge to support the value were also described. Teams presented their preliminary findings to each other during the workshop, which further helped them refine their decisions.

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Hello to the RMS membership. I’m writing from New Zealand, where COVID-19 has been largely eliminated: stopped at the borders by government action and public support that I helped along with our knowledge of the virus. While some businesses, particularly those reliant on international travel, have been terribly hurt or even ruined, day to day activities and work seem normal. We meet, we shop, we carpool, we travel in-country as we did pre-COVID. The economy is doing far better than forecasted a few months ago. New Zealand’s economic recovery is going about as well as in the USA and Australia, and better than the UK and Japan.

New Zealand has recorded fewer than 2,200 COVID-19 cases and 25 deaths with a population of about 4.9 million. Alaska has documented about 47,000 cases and 200 deaths with a population of about 4.9 million. Alaska is a state in our federal republic, while New Zealand is a sovereign nation. Alaska’s population per unit area is tiny compared to New Zealand’s. The US federal government knows this well. European settlers introduced plants and animals with wide-reaching and often unintended consequences and the evidence is all around us, from impenetrable gorse thickets on the hillsides to feral goats in the high country. Of course, Alaskans have been manipulating the environment and dealing with invasive species too. Pacific rat, hogs, and cows were imported to Alaska thousands of years before the moa hunters came to New Zealand.

Turning to rivers, water quality is a present and widespread concern, particularly concerning didymo, a diatom first identified in NZ in 2004, also known as “river snuff.” Didymo came in on top of the dairy farming boom that started in the 1990s. Dairy boosted the economy while introducing increased levels of e. coli and nutrients to water that cause health hazards. Dairy exports have grown ten-fold since 1990 and today many waterways are too dangerous for swimming due to bacterial and algal pathogens. Water quality improvement is now the second priority of the Environment Ministry, after climate change. Pretty much anyone who was alive in 1980 is reminded of water quality loss every time they pass over a bridge or think about having a swim: they know how hard it will be to turn back the tide.

In the bush, New Zealand runs an extensive predator control program. It includes dropping 1080 pellets from helicopters to control rats and other introduced animals that prey on native birds. Rivers are supposed to be avoided by the 1080 drops, but it is clear some of the pellets wind up in the streams and ingested by fish. There are many other invasive mitigation programs underway: just Google “NZ invasive species.”

The bottom line is that the majority of Kiwis are quite familiar with how hard it is to control an invasive species once it gets a foothold. They will therefore support going hard and going early with the goal of elimination of a new exogenous threat and will tolerate subsequent vigilance and expense to maintain gains, especially after a costly and inconvenient initial attack has been successful. When a traveler breaks managed isolation people get mad. Early control at the border is one thing that has been shown to work. In Alaska, with much more land and smaller population, we have a critical mass of people who believe in their hearts. The impacts of invasive species and human action in general are thin on the ground in Alaska, and not so obvious to everyone as they are in New Zealand. Could that be more commensal than leader style? I think so.

Pete Seger famously repeated, "What’s up with the USA, and Alaska in particular, and the failure to deal with COVID?"

I propose that in this issue of the RMS Journal, focusing on Alaskan river issues, it’s worth asking why, while New Zealand was able to largely eliminate the virus, Alaska was not? Both places are physically isolated from the rest of the world, with a small handful of international airports and seaports. Alaska has the long border with Canada and as much coastline as the rest of the US, but as a practical matter, its borders don’t seem harder to control than New Zealand’s. A Kiwi political COVID catchphrase has been, “We go hard and go early.” Doesn’t that sound like something Alaskans could buy into?

There are plenty of differences between these places, of course. Alaska is a state in our federal republic, while New Zealand is a sovereign nation. Alaska’s population per unit area is tiny compared to New Zealand’s. The US federal government has been led by an aged charismatic reality show star who thrives on conflict and recently narrowly lost his bid for reelection, while NZ is led by a young charismatic mother — with a pandemic mantra, “Bo, strong, and be kind to each other” — who recently won a resounding electoral victory. Moving on, and leaving federalism, the commerce clause of the US Constitution, and leadership style to the side, it seems to me there is a significant factor in New Zealand’s pandemic success is widely shared experience of the environmental impacts of invasive species and appreciation for the costly changes in human behavior required for mitigation once invasives are established. This shared knowledge isn’t present in Alaska.

People have been manipulating the environment in New Zealand, extirpating native species and introducing invasive ones, since the earliest Polynesian settlement, and nearly every Kiwi knows this well. European settlers introduced plants and animals with wide-reaching and often unintended consequences and the evidence is all around us, from impenetrable gorse thickets on the hillsides to feral goats in the high country. Of course, Alaskans have been manipulating the environment and dealing with invasive species too. Pacific rat, hogs, and cows were imported to Alaska thousands of years before the moa hunters came to New Zealand.

When I retired from BLM in 2015, Nora and I were well into a multi-year process towards permanent resident status in New Zealand. The idea was to have an endless summer. We would emulate the goodwits and migrate with the seasons between our home in Fairbanks, Alaska, and our second home in Nelson, located on Tasman Bay towards the north end of the South Island. The COVID-19 pandemic changed our plan in March 2020, when my return tickets to Fairbanks via Honolulu were cancelled by the airlines. Soon after, New Zealand ratcheted up a lockdown where everyone except essential workers mostly stayed home for some six weeks. When we went for groceries or medicine, we cleaned our hands, signed in for contact tracing, and kept our distance according to markings on the sidewalks and store floors. The borders were squeezed shut, and remain so. Only NZ residents, with few exceptions, are allowed back in, and everyone is subject to supervised quarantine before movement into the general population is allowed.

Nora and I don’t get out fishing or boating much these days. We ride our bikes. Nora lifts weights. I fly my glider. Glider pilots spend their days trying to visualize, anticipate, and sense how solar energy, gravity, and the earth’s rotation drive air movements at every scale. We may reclinor be less motionless in the cockpit for hours, but there is no time for thoughts of politics or pandemics. We observe the sun on the mountains, the circling birds, and ever-changing clouds with all our might. It is interesting to see how phenomena you find in a stream are manifest in gliding. Air flows over and around the mountains as a fluid, with turbulence and eddies that are difficult to see ahead of time yet can help you move along safely. In fact, hydraulic jumps and downstream waves are the soaring pilot’s main paths to long distance flights at high speeds, far above the thermally active layer of the atmosphere. So, even while our boats sit in Fairbanks, you might say I am still going with the flow.

I admit to some guilt-tripping about the glide. I don’t claim sitting in a carbon composite electronically instrumented cocoon is an especially healthy activity, though it does focus mental and sensory attention on the atmosphere and solar power. Not green, but weird, and a Hum-Hip may put you ahead of the curve. Less ethical than riding a huge self-loader and managing the ice cream cooler? A certain well-known glider coach says it’s “an extreme sport for old guys.” Whatever. I made my peace with it and just hope to learn and improve and meet some goals before I age out. Cheers, Lon Kelly
BLM Managed Wild & Scenic Rivers of Alaska Added to the National Rivers Project

by James Major

The first new additions to the National Rivers Project (NRP) in 2021 are here thanks to our partnership with Zach Million and other staff members of the Alaska Bureau of Land Management! RMS is excited to announce the inclusion of 640 miles of boatable BLM managed rivers in Alaska to the NRP and National River Recreation Database (NRRD). The NRRD is a geospatial portfolio of information on Wild & Scenic Rivers, water trails, whitewater rivers, access points, and campgrounds within the United States. The NRP is the website serving to help identify, explore, and plan trips on rivers within the database. Together, comprehensive river recreation and management information is provided for paddlers and resource managers.

These 640 miles represent segments of 13 designated National Wild & Scenic Rivers across the state. Segments that have been added are on Birch Creek, Beaver Creek, Unalakleet River, Delta River, Tangle River, Gulkana River, along with seven segments of the Fortymile River system. These include Logging Cabin Creek, West Fork Dennison Fork, Dennison Fork, and the North, Middle, South, and Main Forks of the Fortymile River. Several segments are notable for their accessibility in the far North, Middle, South, and Main Forks of the Fortymile River system. These include Logging Cabin Creek, West Fork Dennison Fork, Dennison Fork, and the North, Middle, South, and Main Forks of the Fortymile River. Several segments are notable for their accessibility in the far North, Middle, South, and Main Forks of the Fortymile River.

In addition to the boatable reaches added to the NRP, 19 access sites and 7 campgrounds have also been added to assist with trip planning. A variety of trip lengths can be accomplished on the newly added rivers, from one to two-day trips on the Fortymile, to what the BLM says may be the longest road-to-road float in North America, with put-in for the Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic section at Nome Creek and take-out at the Yukon River Bridge that carries the Dalton Highway 360 miles downstream. Stay tuned in the upcoming months as we add more BLM managed boatable Wild & Scenic Rivers in the Western U.S.!

Contact James Major at james@river-management.org for more details.

The National Rivers Project is a product of several federal agencies, state programs, nonprofit organizations, and efforts of individuals. The Project has been fortunate to work with partners from all over the United States to bring together paddling information for Wild & Scenic Rivers, water trails and whitewater rivers. River Management Society is grateful for financial support offered by the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Without these federal partnerships, the database and website would not be what they are today – what already has been captured, and what is in the queue to add.

by Judy Culver

Recreation, Game and Fish and local tourism groups spent years researching techniques to reach non-traditional users and build local recreation based tourism. COVID-19 solved that conundrum but devastated beloved recreation areas, waterways and river systems around the country. Recreation and river management was turned on its ear by COVID-19 and the unexpected and unprecedented exponential increase in outdoor recreation with daily visitation above and beyond 4th of July weekend numbers.

River managers are used to increased pirated and illegal river trips on permitted rivers during high water years but the usage seen in 2020 was unusual in so many ways. Each state installed frequently changing public restrictions and outfitter policies requiring interpretation, planning on the fly, and adjustments to river permits and for river runners. At a time where some areas were closed, those areas or river systems that remained open were overrun by new users and visitors unfamiliar with even the basic concepts of Leave No Trace, staying on the trail, recreating responsibly on public lands, the importance of wearing lifejackets and knowing the dangers of the activity they are attempting.

Frustration at politics, losing employment, COVID-19 restrictions, being confined, or river systems being closed was expressed through trespass, increased vandalism, illegal and unsafe boat practices, violent conflicts with other river and trail users and general abuse of public, private and tribal lands. Attacks on land managers, private property owners and road crew employees, equipment and each other increased along with visitation numbers skyrocketing above 4th of July numbers in areas that remained open.

RMS began hosting river management discussions attended by state, city, federal agencies and outfitters in an attempt to gather together the resources and information about what river managers were seeing on the ground and how different river programs, outfitters, and states were managing river systems and general operations during COVID-19. Without the support of RMS and the sharing of information and tools to manage use, and protect staff and volunteers, there would have been more impacts, less communication and less planning for 2021 and beyond.

Now the genie is out of the bottle — aggressive and improper behavior is becoming the norm while recreating on public lands and waterways — there is no way in the foreseeable future to put it back in the bottle. River managers and our partners have a huge task of figuring out how to get back to normal.

(continued page 30)
What makes a boating access work (or not)?

Q&A with an author of the first national boat launch database

In the fall of 2020, Confluence Research and Consulting released a report, database, and image gallery describing 269 boat launches that span a wide range of locations, geographic settings, types of facilities, and amounts and kinds of use. The Good, the Bad and the Unusual database helps inspire or home ideas by providing examples from other locations. Once you have an idea of what you want, the database also helps you find similar places for comparison — in your region, or with similar terrain, or with similar use patterns and problems. As you seek funding for developing new or improved access, or for a certain design, you can point to places that have tried something like that before, and even show photos.

RMS: How do you hope the database will grow to include additional samples? Can people still submit data, and if so, how?

Doug: We always viewed this first iteration as a starting point. We recognized that there are many more launches than we could include in the first version, and that it might make sense to expand the database to other sites and launch types in the future. We also knew we would learn from the project — ways to streamline the data input process, better categorize types of launches or facilities, or develop more efficient ways to query the database so it is more easily used. We learned early in the project that some variables were difficult for contributors to complete, and some were less important than we thought originally. We also missed a few variables that should be included going forward. For example, it turns out that average distance that people walk you temporary to unload (what we are now calling “schlepping distance”). The project was set up so we can improve things like this in the future.

RMS: What challenges did you encounter along the way?

Doug: For this first iteration, the main challenge was deciding how detailed to make the database. There is always a tradeoff between comprehensiveness and simplicity. We wanted to make sure we had enough variables to cover the range of important access characteristics, and make meaningful distinctions between different types of launches — but not so many that it is overwhelming users with details or increasing the response burden for contributors who helped populate the database.

RMS: How would you recommend people use these resources at different stages in the planning process?

Doug: The River Access Planning Guide outlines a process for deciding how to develop or improve access. It walks you through the planning steps (assessing existing situation, identifying needs, evaluating options, and assessing and construction options) and how those interact with regional and site characteristics, temporal and spatial use patterns, types of use and visitor experiences, and management capability. In contrast, the The Good, the Bad and the Unusual database helps inspire or home ideas by providing examples from other locations. Once you have an idea of what you want, the database also helps you find similar places for comparison — in your region, or with similar terrain, or with similar use patterns and problems. As you seek funding for developing new or improved access, or for a certain design, you can point to places that have tried something like that before, and even show photos.

RMS: How did you gather data and ensure it was representative?

Doug: We wanted to represent a broad spectrum of access types, from the primitive to the urban. We also wanted representation across the country, recognizing that some variables may differ by region. We formed a team of about ten folks from agencies and NGOs that helped with the project’s brainstorming process, and we had contributions from people who attended a session at the Vancouver RMS Symposium. Confluence then developed the data input form, which the original team reviewed and improved. Finally, we sent the form out to folks around the country — the goal was a representative sample of access sites. Confluence staff completed information for a little over half of the sites in the database, over 25 other people helped expand the database so it covered a diverse range of launch types and regions. For this first version of the database, we developed a data describing about 80 different variables for 269 launches, including at least one from every state.

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RMS: How did this project originate, and who identified the need for this data?

Doug: As the River Access Planning Guide was being developed, several people realized that we didn’t have a database of accesses to reference as examples. As Joan Hart of NPS noted, her staff would benefit greatly from information such as sizes of ramps or parking lots to the ramp (which we are now calling “schlepping distance”). The project was set up so we can improve things like this in the future.

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How does an “agricultural logo” relate to river management?

by Dave Schade

If you have been following my articles over the years, you would see that my own understanding of river management has expanded (evolved) over the last decade as I have changed positions here in the Department of Natural Resources

In my last journal article, I discussed why I believe that the river management field is much larger than most of us routinely think and that everyone is now (or at least should be) much more aware of the need for water and management of our water resources.

In my new position as Director of the Division of Agriculture, I started an assessment of the state of the Division and the industry. I did not get very far along with the analyses, when I realized the Division didn’t have a logo. All other DNR Divisions had great logos, but staff had defaulted to using our “Alaska Grown” marketing logo; and after lengthy discussion, I learned that three different attempts to design a logo had failed.

Therefore, I decided that it was imperative for our staff to design a logo for the Division. That became a process in itself, and it soon became apparent why the previous attempts failed. In short (just like the issues and discussions we had when developing our new RMS logo), the views on what the Division did and how we should portray ourselves were so divergent — we couldn’t get a focus on where to go. So, we decided to develop a number of types of logos, and then started to eliminate and refine where we wanted to go. We quickly figured out that while some delightful, artistic designs were great for color print, when we tried to figure out how to use them on a shirt or other materials, they would be pretty near impossible. We also had to steer clear of conflicts with other state and agricultural-themed logos as well.

Now, don’t think this went quickly or easily. We had many, many revisions, and hours of discussion on which animals to put on the logo, what kind of tractor, etc. But, in the end, we decided to leave the concept simple — and hopefully, it is one that will stand the test of time. However, we still were not done. This logo could be used for many northern latitude states (or even country ag departments) so we tried a couple of additions to make it Alaska. The final two came down to a northern lights sky or the Alaska flag’s “big dipper.” And again, since the northern lights are not just a symbol of Alaska, I pushed for the state flag background. I think that our team did a great job on the logo, and am equally happy with how we all discussed the issues of water and rivers and their importance as we went through the process.

In closing, I hope you can see how everyone (especially managers) should consider rivers — even those who work in agricultural management need an understanding (read RMS training here) of watershed and river management. I also hope you like the final Alaska Division of Agriculture’s logo as well as we all do!

1 For those of you who have not, I started in 2008 as the Navigability Sub-Unit Manager in the Public Access Assertion and Defense Unit (a river manager job), then in 2012 became the Water Resources Section Chief (all things water management surface and subsurface) and I am now the Director of the Division of Agriculture.
President – Emma Lord

Emma’s love for water and rivers started in the foothills of the Catskill Mountains in upstate New York. Summertime trips to the best (and secret) swimming hole on Catskill Creek were filled with swimming, fossil collecting, wildlife sightings, and the all-around enjoyment of the sights and sounds of being on a river. Emma earned a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Green Mountain College (2013) and M.S. in Geology from the University of North Dakota (2016), with a concentration in geomorphology. She is currently a Natural Resource Specialist with the National Park Service (NPS) in New Hampshire. Working in the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program, Emma works with local Wild and Scenic communities and partners to protect and enhance their outstanding rivers and river-related resources through a collaborative approach.

After a referral from a longstanding member, Emma joined RMS in 2017 while working as a Wild and Scenic Rivers Fellow with NPS. She served as the RMS Northeast Chapter President from 2018-2020 and helped with the marketing and outreach efforts for the 2018 RMS Symposium. Emma is currently on the planning team for the 2021 RMS Symposium as well.

Vice President – John Field

Dr. John Field, President of Field Geology Services, LLC, received a Ph.D. in 1994 from the University of Arizona with concentrations in fluvial geomorphology and hydrology. During eight years as a university professor, Dr. Field received two excellence in teaching awards and was active in training teachers and government agency personnel on techniques for identifying flood and erosion hazards and assessing the stability and habitat conditions of rivers. Dr. Field has over 20 years of professional experience related to river restoration and has designed and installed numerous projects throughout New England utilizing large wood to improve river function and aquatic habitat. John has also been involved in international work, most recently in Nepal — working to prevent irrigation canal intakes from being eroded away by the Karnali River, the largest in Nepal.

Trip Coordinator – John Little

During college, John worked for the Chewonki Foundation in Maine, initially as a camp counselor then a certified Canoe and Hiking Trip Leader. He was in love with the idea that he could get paid to travel and explore many of the best wild rivers in Maine. Since then, John’s paddled the Moose and George in Quebec, the Connecticut and Susquehanna, as well as paddling from the Quebec border to NYC via Lake Champlain, the Champlain Canal and the Hudson River.

In 1982 John became employed at Richford Jr/Sr High School as their upper level science teacher. He enriched the curriculum with many field trips over the years, as well as co-lead the school’s ski program. In 1996 John earned a M.S. for Teachers, and expanded his teaching to include both Community College of Vermont and Vermont Technical College. Always he stressed the importance of the hands-on, experiential aspects of science and learning.

In the early 1990’s, John joined forces with other local citizens in an effort to protect their local river — from this sprang the Missisquoi River Basin Association (MRBA), working to protect and improve water quality for more than 25 years. MRBA has planted more than 20,000 trees, provided hands-on educational programs to local schools, and won the Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence.

In 2004, with the support of the MRBA, John started going to local town boards and businesses to gain support for National Wild and Scenic Rivers designation. A decade later, the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers (UMATR) were added to the national register of Wild and Scenic Rivers. Since, this new entity has been working to help disburse federal funds to preserve, protect and increase access to the designated sections of the local watershed. A couple years later, RMS presented John with the Frank Church Wild and Scenic Rivers Award in recognition of his efforts to make this all happen.

John has spent a goodly part of his life teaching about the natural world and how to enjoy its beauty. After 36 years in the public arena, he retired from teaching in 2018. John intends to spend more time paddling our natural aquatic environments, as well as enjoying his home in the hills of Vermont.
Linking Mesoscale Meteorology With Extreme Landscape Response: Effects of Narrow Cold Frontal Rainbands (NCFR)

by Brian D. Collins, Ph.D., P.E.

Major storms can cause extreme and hazardous landscape disturbances, but links between storm conditions and landscape response such as erosion and landslides remain poorly constrained. This is partly due to the lack of attention generally given to the finer-scale details of storms. We examined one type of atmospheric feature that is common in western North America (as well as in other regions), the narrow cold frontal rainband, and studied its effects on the landscape. In 2018, one such event in the Tuolumne River watershed, California, caused more than 500 landslides in a narrow area, moving more sediment in one day than the river would normally transport in a year. We find that landscape change, including potentially hazardous events such as landslides, can be driven primarily by fine-scale rainfall patterns rather than by the larger-scale storm conditions. More integration between weather and landscape scientists can advance knowledge of how storms influence landscapes and produce hazards, especially during extreme events.

Below: Oblique image of the hundreds of shallow landslides within the Tuolumne River canyon north of Groveland, California, caused by the 22 March 2018 NCFR. Inset image shows view taken from river level on 21 April 2019 of the area encompassed by the black rectangle. Oblique image from GeoEye taken on 17 April 2018.

Below: Examples of geomorphic effects from the 22 March 2018 storm in the Tuolumne River canyon. (a) Overview image taken one day after the storm showing shallow landslide and debris flow scars. Image credit: Wayne Handley (used with permission). (b) Detail of initiation zone for one landslide, where soil failed down to saprolite on a south facing hillslope covered with grass. Pink arrow in (a) identifies location and view angle of image. Panels (c) and (d) show aerial images of the confluence of the Grapevine Creek tributary with the Tuolumne River in 2016 (prestorm) and 2018 (poststorm), respectively (yellow dot identifies identical location in [a], see also bottom right area of previous figure on p.24). In (d), compared to (c), landslides and debris flow channels are visible on hillslopes on both sides of the river, and the debris fan at the mouth of Grapevine Creek had enlarged greatly, as had a gravel bar 200 m downstream. Bank erosion occurred as the flow shifted toward river-left (south) in response to enlargement of the Grapevine Creek debris fan. 

This brief summary was submitted by:
Brian D. Collins, Ph.D., P.E.
Research Civil Engineer
U.S. Geological Survey
P.O. Box 158, Moffett Field, CA 94035
650-439-2466

A full journal article about the March 2018 Tuolumne Canyon landslides can be found at: https://doi.org/10.1029/2020JF005675
Helen has been very involved with the RMS River Training Center since its inception in 2016 as a mentor, advisor and trainer. She was recently awarded the Interagency Wild and Scenic River Coordinating Council’s Jackie Diedrich Wild and Scenic Rivers Leadership Award in recognition of her contributions to the River Training Center, helping to ensure that RMS meets the training needs of Wild and Scenic river managers throughout the country.

Helen lives in Juneau, AK, and during “normal” years spends a lot of time with her husband and dogs on a 40-foot trawler fishing and boating around southeast Alaska, British Columbia and Washington. Welcome back Helen, and thank you for your continued service and dedication!

Helen Clough Receives Jackie Diedrich Wild and Scenic Rivers Leadership Award

by Bekah Price

The River Management Society (RMS) is thrilled to congratulate our incredible RMS Secretary Helen Clough on receiving the Jackie Diedrich Wild and Scenic Rivers Leadership Award from the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (IWSRCC) on December 17, 2020.

The Council’s Acting Chair Jennifer Beck, National Park Service, presented the award. The award recognizes river administering agency staff and former staff who have shown outstanding leadership in going above and beyond their assigned duties to help federal agencies protect and manage Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs), build capacity for river stewardship, and develop exemplary training programs for WSR professionals — alongside her responsibilities as a member of the RMS Board of Directors.

In her federal career, Helen worked for several agencies, including as the Chief of Conservation Planning and Policy for the National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska for over six years, at the National Conservation Training Center, with the Bureau of Land Management, and with the USDA Forest Service. Throughout her career, Helen has developed, provided, and overseen training for thousands of employees and she continues to carry this work forward with an emphasis on river stewardship and management.

When asked for her thoughts on how river lovers can translate their passion into action, Helen reflected on following the advice of a mentor to get out there and see the rivers you’re working on: “It really did help me understand the issues and the planning, and gave me multiple opportunities to visit folks in the small rural Alaska Native villages along several of the rivers.”

She has appreciated over time seeing positive results from many of the things she recommended being implemented. When reflecting on volunteering, Helen noted that it was a great way to gain experience, insight, and contacts, plus accomplish important work that might not be part of your job. “We’re all in this for the long haul, so don’t get discouraged or give up – keep trying until you find something that does work.”

Just a few examples of Helen’s commitment and contributions include chairing the 2018 Wild, Scenic and Beyond! River Management Symposium, in large measure a commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act; serving as Chair for the upcoming RMS Symposium in May 2021; organizing and supporting RMS training opportunities across the spectrum of river topics; coaching sessions for Comprehensive River Management Plans; multiple roles on the RMS Board of Directors; and participation in the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council subcommittee.

Helen has given not just funding and time, but heart to the WSR system. Her commitment to training the next generation of stewards and working proactively to ensure a broad base of agency, partner, and general understanding of WSRs is unparalleled. Thank you, Helen, and all the best for your next river adventures!

What is the best part of being involved with RMS?

Helen: “The combined skills, knowledge, dedication, and willingness to share of our members. I learned so much from folks like Jackie, Bob, Rosa, Linda, Bo and a host of others who don’t even know me but taught me a lot of great stuff — what a privilege to work with a whole bunch of incredible people! It’s also a great opportunity for continuous learning.”

Always a self-described water person, Helen plunged into river management plans when she went to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1990. Seeking more knowledge and training, she joined RMS and attended the first Rivers for Tomorrow symposium in Portland, Oregon. From there, Helen built a rich professional and volunteer career that included helping federal river management agencies protect and manage WSRs, build capacity for WSR stewardship, and develop exemplary training programs for WSR professionals — alongside her responsibilities as a member of the RMS Board of Directors.

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Helen Clough and Ketcher
by Cody Perry

Herm Hoops. Dedicated river runner, historian, advocate, and general pain in the ass passed away at his home in Jensen, Utah, on Monday afternoon, November 23rd. I like to think that as he pushed off this last time, the Green River inexplicably swelled to flood stage. A final gesture to an old friend. Let the following be a humble tribute in grief and love, waving farewell to this unforgettable character in the toucan hat.

Herm grew up as a rough-and-tumble farm kid in tri-state New York. The Hoops family had a small but notable operation raising horses, cows, and producing hay. It’s here where Herm molded his adventurous spirit with plenty of open spaces and the oars of a little row boat to pull around the farm pond.

His first introduction to the wide West was through the window of a 50’s station wagon during a family road trip. That trip, the scale of it all, left an indelible impression on the Hoops family; but it’s clear that for Herm it was the beginning of something altogether different. Herm learned to love running rivers in Vermont, but somehow managed to be an outlaw and a sheriff in the river community at once, and he did that across decades. He knew the owners and operators of major inflatable boat manufacturers and, maybe more importantly, every bartender at Ray’s Tavern in Green River.

I can speak for the river community that we’ve lost an elder and an icon. His absence will be felt in the circles of average river rats, federal water managers, congressional staffers, and anyone foolish enough to let Herm Hoops get a hold of your email address. It’s been a single day and Herm was mercurial. He was serious, obsessive, and could dig in with no intention to budge. He was also a hopeless romantic, he was reflective, self deprecating and FUNNY! Herm somehow managed to be an outlaw and a sheriff in the river community all at once, and he did that across decades. He knew the owners and operators of major inflatable boat manufacturers and, maybe more importantly, every bartender at Ray’s Tavern in Green River.

Herm was a solid chance any given river guide in Desolation or Dinosaur either knew, loved, tolerated or were terrified of Herm Hoops. An imposing, large, grizzly of a man, who is always introduced as a legend and known to wear a toucan hat on the river, and little else. Herm was mercurial. He was serious, obsessive, and could dig in with no intention to budge. He was also a hopeless romantic, he was reflective, self deprecating and FUNNY! Herm somehow managed to be an outlaw and a sheriff in the river community all at once, and he did that across decades. He knew the owners and operators of major inflatable boat manufacturers and, maybe more importantly, every bartender at Ray’s Tavern in Green River.

Herm’s love for rivers isn’t unusual; but his lifelong dedication to their conservation is. Years of participating in the mundane public comment process, attending countless late-night water meetings across the region, drafting letter after letter to all levels of decision-makers. Herm did all this — he made a difference. He made worthy friends and adversaries. He straddled a time before and after standardized western river regulations were developed, before designer water managers and Facebook forums. Herm led generations of boaters toward his own brand of a conservation ethic before river conservation was an assumed pillar of rafting culture. Herm understood that threats came from not only oil and gas, or water development, but also unchecked recreation along these treasured rivers. When it came to protecting a place, Herm never stopped pushing the rafting industry, the boating community, or stirring the pot.

Herm’s passion went beyond the deep canyons of the Colorado Plateau and into the arms and support of his loving partner Valerie. Herm met Val while he was working as a ranger in Dinosaur National Monument and lucky for him, convinced her to come on a river trip. Val is beautiful, quiet, and shy. Herm is large, bellicose, and gregarious. Like a swirling eddy, they balanced each other. Herm and Val had a tradition of conducting a romantic dinner on the banks of the river. Herm looking dapper in a formal military mess dress uniform and Val dazzling in a black mini skirt cocktail dress. They’d set out a table complete with candles and champagne. Toasting their union, enveloped in majesty around them, enveloped in each other.

Herm loved being a father to his two kids — Hatteras and Gillian — and introduced them both to the river as toddlers. At the put-in, Herm would place young Gill in the truck with her foot on the gas, then he would run back to blow up the boat with a hose of engine exhaust. Herm told his kids there was never any room for a tent... they’d have to sleep under the stars. There was no room for hot cocoa, only coffee, no room for Hatt’s walkman either. Herm instead suggested they indulge themselves with the sound of water dripping off the oars and the song of the canyon wren. Hatt and Gill may not have understood it at the time, I wouldn’t have either, but Herm was weaving the river into his kids’ very being. He made sure that the river would flow from within.

By nature all rafters have river families, and Herm is no exception. The canyons were sacred — like a key to the universe within.

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how to educate millions of non-traditional users on water safety, the importance of life jackets, sharing resources, and “Leave No Trace” while attempting to mitigate vandalism, destroyed relationships with private, tribal and local communities, and lost access to public lands and river systems.

Surprisingly, river managers are faced with managing traditional river users who normally respect river permitting processes, who exploited many river system group sizes and permit restrictions knowing that staffing was decreased or non-existent. Sadly this behavior was expensive and experienced across the country.

2021 will see an unprecedented number of roll-over river permits that were canceled due to river systems being closed down or in the case of New Mexico, in addition to the closure, a 14-day mandatory quarantine of out of state visitors where the Rio Chama reopened. The process of rolling over permits has been piecemeal due to glitches in recreation.gov but is still moving forward albeit slowly. As a result of the roll-over permits, the number of launches available through lotteries will be decreased, thus altering the percentage of successful lottery winners in 2021.

Collaboration amongst river managers across the agencies, states, and organizations is more important than ever to continue communicating the good, bad and ugly of 2020 and beyond. The challenges going forward will be salted with the lessons learned in 2020 and the hope that the 2021 river seasons around the country will open without COVID-19 restrictions.
Alaska Chapter Focus

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RMS Journal

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