

# BOWLINES

Award Winning Newsletter of The Bluegrass Wildwater Association since 1976. Nov/Dec 2020

## *In our Own Words.....*

In this Issue:

Reasons to Paddle  
I Was Really Lucky  
Backpaddling Thru the Pages of Bowlines: Kent Ford at the 2004 Olympics  
Elkhorn Update  
Eddy Lines



*The Virtual Campfire: "Why we boat" series continues with articles by Brent Austin & Kent Ford*



# Looking Ahead

Second Tuesday of the Month, 7:30 pm

## BWA Monthly Meeting

Location can vary

For more information on Club Meetings  
& Activities always check the [online Calendar](#).

<http://bwa.shuttlepod.org>

## All BWA

Meetings/Activities are on hold, check BWA web site or look for e-mail updates

## Roll Sessions

For Dates, info and to register go to Calendar:

<http://bwa.shuttlepod.org>



The BWA wishes to thank Canoe Kentucky for its support.  
We urge you to patronize them for your outdoor needs.

Check out Bowlines Online Archive with many great issues going back to 1998!

Issue Archive:

<http://bwa.shuttlepod.org/Newsletter>

A must read for all members, our 30th Anniversary issue:

[http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/bowlines/BL30thAnnv\\_Aug06.pdf](http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/bowlines/BL30thAnnv_Aug06.pdf)



Bowlines is the Newsletter of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, POB 4231, Lexington Ky, 40504

### Club Officers 2020-2021

President	Sandra Broadus	859-983-4475
Vice-President	Emily Grimes	859-358-0912
Treasurer	Kyle Koeberlein	502-370-1289
Secretary	Walt Hummel	859-351-0132
Safety	Dave Forman	859-550-9040
Program	Clay Warren	859-326-0602
Newsletter	Don Spangler	859-277-7314
Cyber Communications	Michael Williams	859-893-0114
Conservation	Bob Larkin	502-550-4225
Film Festival Coordinator	Regina Hatfield	859-797-6988
Equipment Coordinator	Jansen Koeberlein	270-703-0352
At-Large Member	Gus Milton	859-489-1337
Membership Coordinator	Will Samples	859-351-0132
Past President	Rober Watts	859-554-8489

### Join in on the Fun!

Join the BWA! BWA Membership \$20/individual; \$25/Family year entitles you to receive the newsletter, 10% discounts at many local and out of state outfitter shops, use of club equipment, discount at pool rolling sessions, a listing in the BWA Handbook, a stream gauge guide, and web site with a forum for member's messages & a parking pass for the Elkhorn.

Meetings are held at 7:30, the second Tuesday of each month at location announced on our website: <http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org>

**BWA members want to read your story!  
Short or long. Sad or Funny.  
Tell us your paddling related story! Please!!**

Files can be e-mailed to the Editor: [DonSpang@aol.com](mailto:DonSpang@aol.com)



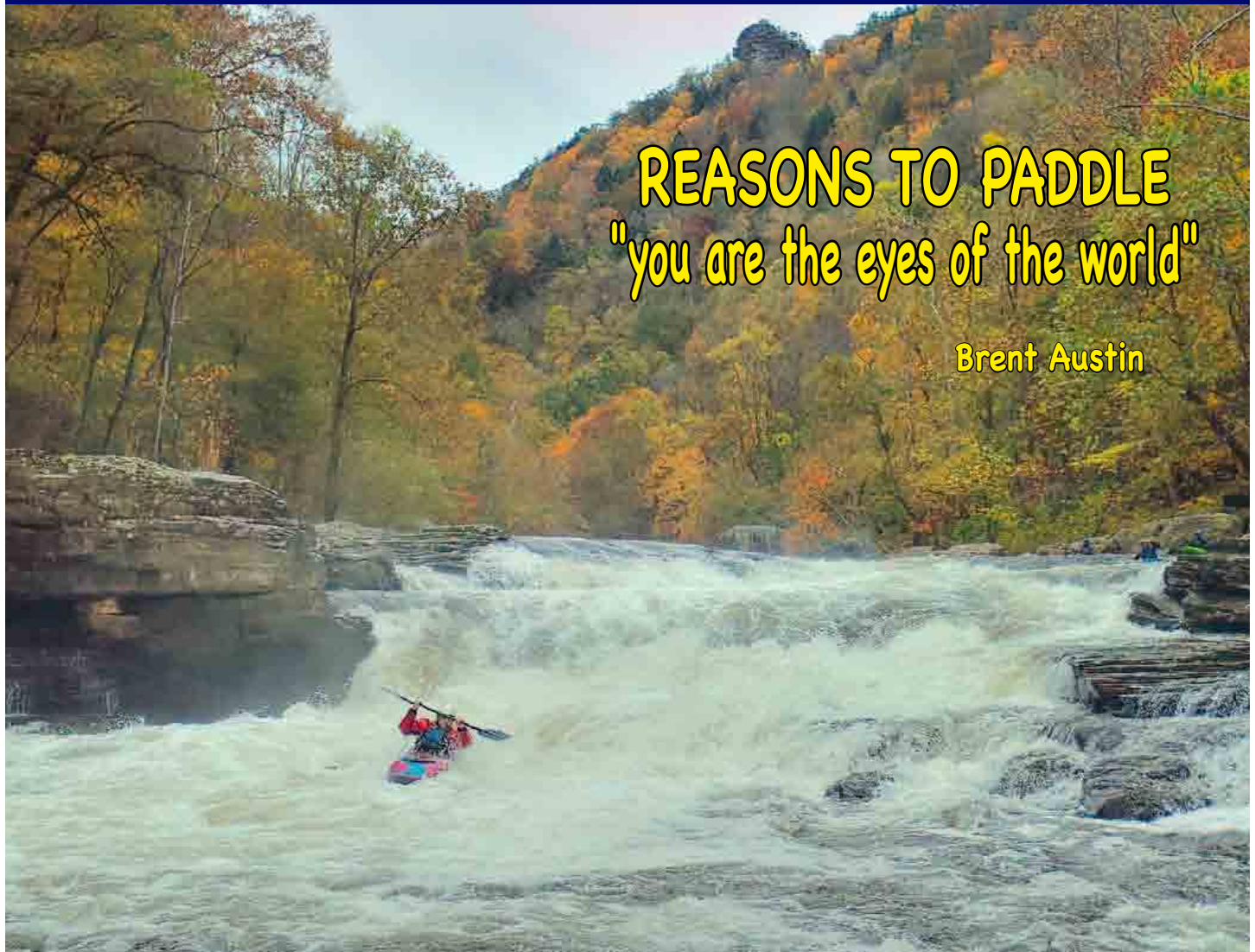
### About the BWA's Bowlines

The Bowlines has been a unique record of the BWA and its members. Unique in that it has been more than a listing of club activities and general information about paddling and related issues. When you read Bowlines you read about each of us and what we thought and did over the years. Members have contributed articles not only about paddling, conservation, and the club, but also stories crafted with humor, imagination, and the spirit of enthusiasm of life and enjoyment of each other. These are only a small portion of the many articles worth rereading. There have been songs, poems, soap operas, jokes, cartoons, wedding announcements, birth announcements, and unique trip reports among all the issues. Not what you might think you would see in a whitewater club newsletter.

We owe a thank you to all the newsletter editors that spent countless hours preparing each issue. To all you club members a big BWA hand for your contributions. Please keep it up! Now dig in and enjoy old memories or chuckle at the amusing stories, poems and pictures...



## *The Virtual Campfire: "Why we boat" series*



### REASONS TO PADDLE "you are the eyes of the world"

Brent Austin

When Don Spangler asked me to do an article that reflected on why I started to paddle, I mused that it had much to do with the reasons I still paddle. This year, 2020 has been challenging on many fronts. I am 61 years old and fast approaching 62. I had mild injuries this year that impacted my paddling calendar year. Instead of 150 days, I probably paddled 100. All tendonitis kinda stuff: elbow inflammation, a shoulder blade muscle inflamed, you know, old guy phenomenon. My brain has a hard time getting around it, but not my orthopedics. I got only 5 Upper Gauley days, got laid up and only finally got two Russell Fork Gorge laps during the race weekend. Still ouchy as I write a few weeks out from that.

But, I need this sport. I need rivers and wild places with my friends. It is in my soul. I need to paddle out in beautiful places, with my community of life friends, which is like a village because we cross so many age ranges when we paddle. I love having deep friendships on rivers like the Russell Fork gorge, from late teens to kids older than me out there, and there are some, for sure. It is egalitarian across ages, races and gender. Some of my best paddling friends and partners have been female. I have paddled all over the world, and a Nepalese paddler, or an Ecuadorian paddler, are instant soul mates on amazing rivers just like the local kids on the Cumberland Plateau. Boaters are boaters, everywhere in the world. We have a link. So, thinking back, I am pretty sure the path I chose long ago related to paddling rivers and the reasons for doing so, all led me to where I am today.





# *Eyes of the World*

(by the Grateful Dead)

Right outside this lazy summer home  
You ain't got time to call your soul a critic no  
Right outside the lazy gate of winter's summer home  
Wondering where the nut-thatch winters  
Wings a mile long just carried the bird away

Wake up to find out that you are the eyes of the world  
The heart has it's beaches, it's homeland and thoughts of it's own  
Wake now, discover that you are the song that the morning brings  
But the heart has it's seasons, it's evenings and songs of it's own

There comes a redeemer, and he slowly too fades away  
And there follows his wagon behind him that's loaded with clay  
And the seeds that were silent all burst into bloom, and decay  
And night comes so quiet, it's close on the heels of the day

Wake up to find out that you are the eyes of the world  
The heart has it's beaches, it's homeland and thoughts of it's own  
Wake now, discover that you are the song that the morning brings  
But the heart has it's seasons, it's evenings and songs of it's own  
Sometimes we live no particular way but our own

And sometimes we visit your country and live in your home  
Sometimes we ride on your horses, sometimes we walk alone  
Sometimes the songs that we hear are just songs of our own

Wake up to find out that you are the eyes of the world  
The heart has it's beaches, it's homeland and thoughts of it's own  
Wake now, discover that you are the song that the morning brings  
But the heart has it's seasons, it's evenings and songs of it's own



So, my journey to here, as a 60 something whitewater paddler, began long ago, probably with my early days of camping in the great outdoors in Boy Scouts. I know there is controversy about that organization today, but back then, I had great experiences and it was at Boy Scout camp when I was 11, doing a 50 miler, afoot, afloat, and getting a canoeing merit badge that I learned a J stroke. Now, my canoeing was mostly lake experiences until about 1979 when I moved to Lexington to go to UK and did a low water over night canoe trip with some friends on Elkhorn Creek. By 1982, I went on a raft trip with my Dad on Section IV of the Chattooga and was super intrigued with the whitewater kayakers and canoeists that I was seeing out there.

By the mid 80s, while still in Law school, I had invested in a used Phoenix fiberglass boat for about \$150 and promptly went out and cracked it open on Elkhorn Creek. That ended that. I never have been much of a fix it dude. By 1989, my girlfriend, Randi Beard, and I had invested in a couple of brand new Dancers, which seemed unbreakable until it met me, got a kayak roll at the Cross Keys YWCA in Lexington, and soon we were boating with the BWA folks. Back then, Spangler was young, although he seemed old. Barry and Cynthia Grimes had two small kids (Dan and Emily) in the early 90s and we camped in their Westfalia one spring day at the put in for the Lower Gauley, when you could drive right to the river above Kootz's Flume. I came on fast and hard. Robert Hebble and I did our first lap on the Lower Gauley, by ourselves, having memorized William Nealy descriptions and beta from our friends. My first time down the Russell Fork Gorge was an R2 trip in 1989 and I knew that I was not ready to kayak it, yet. But it was cool. I first met John Regan, now an old friend, that day kayaking down El Horrendo, every which way but loose, over and over, loud and with tons of stoke as he still does today. If you have rolled with me to the Upper Yough, you have likely met him and know what I am talking about.

Back in the early days I was moved by the community I saw, first with the BWA, but also with the broader river community at the Russell Fork and Gauley: old friends, new friends, music, rivers, outdoor living and camping simply pushed all my buttons. I liked it all better than Grateful Dead shows and the incredible experience I always had at any Shakedown Street outside the venue. Seriously, everyone knows I love the Dead, but after the year 1992, I never saw another Dead show again because it seemed to conflict with my desire to boat every "bigger, better and harder" run around the country and the world. That fall was my first kayak descent of the Russell Fork gorge. (link to my article on that here). I am sorry Jerry, but the river called. (Plus, my taper friends still gave me recent shows to listen to on my boating trips).

I started paddling out of the country in 1992. Trip to Costa Rica that year sparked my desire to do more remote runs in remote places. The next year, Mike Clark, Chris Hipgrave, Andy Lee and I did a first descent on the Chirripo Atlantico south of the Pacuare drainage in Costa Rica. Mike Clark wrote an article using some of my photos about that trip. (link here). Trips to Nepal in 1995 and three consecutive years in Ecuador after that, all reflected that need to get out in remote places on rivers with good friends. I paddled all over Colorado and California. Lots of stellar runs. I particularly loved the Cumberland Plateau and fondly remember a week of rivers trip that involved Bee Creek, Caney Fork, Little Possum, McGill Creek and one of my steepest runs ever on Henderson Creek. Action, friends, wild places all called to me. Still do, although I am much slowed down.



That seems to be the thread that leads to today, an older boater still reveling in the amazing river corridors I find myself in. I love the sport, the rivers and the people. Nothing has really changed, except the miles on the old frame. I paddled then as now because my soul requires it for all those reasons and more.

See you on the river! Join American Whitewater!  
Brent Austin

# *The Virtual Campfire: "Why we boat series"*

**I was really lucky!**



My start in whitewater paddling in the early 1970's took much the same route as many of the early paddlers. My first introduction to canoe paddling was at summer camp, which included a river trip for the senior level campers.

On my return from camp at age 13, I guess I had shown enough passion to inspire my parents to figure out how I could continue in paddling.

My parents were also "sierra club" hikers, and weekend forays to trails along the Potomac River gave them a view of the few people out paddling the rapids near Washington, D.C. I was really lucky! I got involved with my parents and then my parents stumbled upon the slalom scene. At an ensuing trip to the local outdoor store, there happened to be a used fiberglass C-2 we saw for sale. So, of course, soon we were taking it to the local Sunday morning pool sessions for rolling and paddling flatwater slalom gates to learn how to paddle the fragile craft without hitting rocks.



*Kent along a trial at the Potomac where gates are set up for local paddlers to practice on.*

My dad was an astronomer who helped establish the existence of dark matter, and like many early pioneers, for him the river was something cool, new and different to be figured out. As we joined other early paddlers of the 1970s we found many other scientists, including experts in communications for Apollo space missions, and pioneering computer networking.

Fast forward a few months, and we were building boats in our basement with the guidance of Jim Raleigh (Bell Labs communications Engineer), and attending a few slalom races such as Petersburg, where pretty much



every paddler on the east coast would attend. The local paddling club was an essential part of networking all the paddlers so you could get beta on how and where to paddle.

Local paddler Jamie McEwan would win a bronze medal at the 1972 Olympics in whitewater slalom, and the sport would get a hit of exposure from the movie Deliverance.

Then, age 16, I got my drivers license and took to driving to the river nearly every day. A collision of luck had me in teenage one-upmanship with Jon Lugbill, Davey Hearn, Bob Robison. This was mainly for fun. But soon, our coach Bill Endicott would apply rigorous framework to our paddling in the David Taylor Model Basin, a Navy design and testing facility, where we had after hours security clearance to paddle the 1/2 mile long indoor tanks during the winter. This gave us a jump on the rest of the world in competition, and soon we were taking many podiums at the World Championships in C-1 events.

I kept at slalom racing and then coaching for many years. Many of my international friends made the same transition, from young racer to veteran, to coach, and ultimately to organizing international competitions. I had opportunity to work as public address announcer or event presentation manager at 5 Olympic Games.

By the 1980s most boats were roto-molded plastic, which lowered the barrier to participating. I worked 13 years at Nantahala Outdoor Center, assisting the paddling school, which in those years provided systematic learning for most paddlers starting in the east. While at NOC, John Davis (BWA C-1 legend and photographer for WKYT, Channel 27 in Lexington, Ky.) approached me with an idea to start an instructional video business. As the sport grew, instructional videos became a way for this education, and we packaged the knowledge of others into training materials that became popular worldwide.

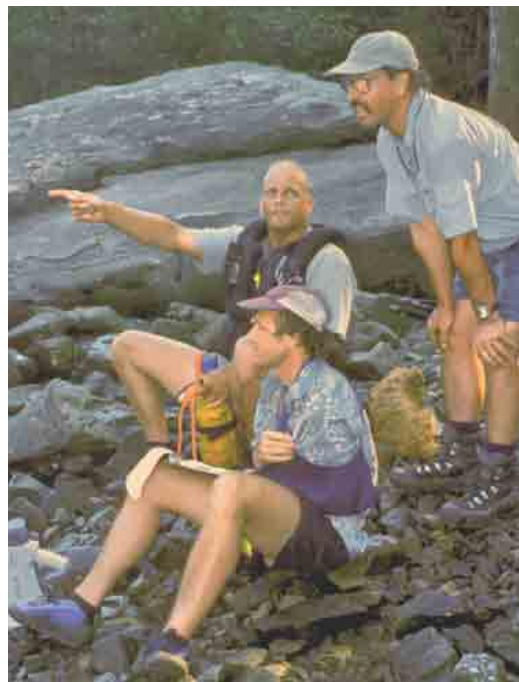
I keep at it with 17 boats in the quiver, from Grand Canyon Dory, to SUPS, slalom boats, and river runners. I hope to never quit teaching paddling, as the resulting pleasure from exposing people to rivers is thrilling.



*Kent Ford & John Davis working on Paddling History Video with friend Bill Endicott for US Team coach at World Cup, World Championships, and US Team Olympic events.*



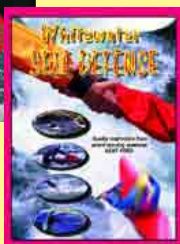
*Kent Ford explains whitewater paddling to spectators with his live commentary while paddling at the Athens & Sydney Olympic Games.*



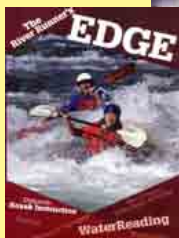
*Kent Ford & John Davis working with Charlie Walbridge nationally-known whitewater safety expert on River Safety video at The Upper Gauley.*

**Want to improve your paddling?  
Here is a Free deal from Kent Ford:**

Enjoy Kent's videos for **free streaming and downloads** at [performancevideo.com](http://performancevideo.com)



**Choose from these & Many Others!!**





## Kent Ford at the 2004 Olympics

*Kent's Olympic Trip report (Bowlines Exclusive)*

The racecourse in Athens is very cool... the "river" gets pumped in a circle, and conveyor belts return the paddlers to the top. The infield is about half the size of a football field, and the river runs 270 meters (885 feet), enclosed in the intimacy of a small college stadium. The 630 cfs of saltwater is pumped up 21 feet by 5 pumps creating a romping, foaming 125 foot per mile racecourse.

The river bottom is like giant legos... leading more than one paddler has been hear to say "I can't believe the grown-ups are letting us do this."

I had an unbelievable time working the Olympics, where I was working as a stadium announcer for slalom, which was the same team I ran at the 1992, 96, and 2000 Olympics. Our team coordinated public address announcing, scoreboards, music, etc.

In Athens, my main job was to paddle the course wearing a wireless microphone, 30 minutes before the race started, to explain the course and the rules to the spectators. Quite a rush to be speaking



**Lego river bottom**



**Empty river bottom**



**The course at low water showing legos form rapids**

to 8,000 spectators while trying to paddle the slalom gates on the Olympic course. Spectators seem to enjoy it hearing me gasp for breath as I scrambled down the continuous Class IV drops!

**Each of the four days went something like this:**

Announcers from Public Address tower. (Mission Impossible theme playing in background:) "To give you spectators a feel for this whitewater course, turn your eyes up to the start area to Kent Ford. He is in his boat, ready to go."

**Then I would start speaking, live from my boat...**

*"This is Kent Ford, reporting live from the blue boat in the start pool. My job out here is to give you a sample experience of today's slalom event. I will go about 1/3 the speed of the racers, and take some time to explain the gates, the judging and the whitewater for those of you unfamiliar with the sport. I'll also make a few mistakes, so you can better appreciate how precise these racers are with their paddling. I'm the only one out here today planning to go slowly and make mistakes."*



**Conveyer belt to the start pool**

*"I have just gotten off the conveyor belt that brings the athletes up from their warm up area. Since this start pool is small, most paddlers will have a 30 minute warm-up on flatwater early in the day, and then take a break to walk and review the course one final time before their race. Here in the start pool there is only space for a few short sprints, and some final mental preparations. The athletes can recite every inch of this course, 1 down, 2 down*



stay wide, 3 down, 4 up left, etc. "

I move to start gate, and wait, while my first lines are translated to Greek!



"Lets move into the start gate. Racers will pull in here about 1 minute before their run, and do a final check of their gear. Some splash their face so the first wave isn't a surprise.

As the start clock winds down to 5 seconds, the racer hears a series of beeps, then is off. The time actually starts moments later as they cross the start line."

### **During first 3 gates**

"The first part of the course is fast but fairly basic. This allows the racers to develop a good flow, and fast feeling. Most important for this are the red and white upstream gates, where a lot of the time is gained and lost. The idea is to arrive high in the gate, and keep the boat turning. Every stroke taken in one of these upstreams costs nearly a second on my race time. There are 6 of these ups



on the course, 3 on the left, 3 on the right".

Next sequence, at the biggest drop. I nervously eye the drop while the Greek announcer translates. I try to guess when she is done, so I can take off and start speaking again.

"The racers spend quite a bit of time studying the course, so they know exactly where to place their boat, and where to place each stroke. They read the river, and figure out how to use the current and how to handle the waves and stoppers. You can see how the current is pulling me back up this calm spot, called an eddy."

"This next part is the toughest section of the course. The whitewater intensifies, and the gates are placed where they are more problematic"

### **next 3 gates**

"This next sequence is a series of staggers or off-set gates. The racers try to do these with their



boat on a tight line, turning before each gate, after going very close to one pole to have the shortest possible line. The poles are set about 15cm off the highest flux of the water, so the boats can go underneath the poles but that takes skill and careful calculation to not get bounced into a pole.

The racers try to keep the boat tracking with little wobble, or wag side to side. This way the boat glides, and goes faster with each stroke. The goal is to do these quickly, without touches, since every touch gets a 2 second penalty. "

### **Around gate 11 or 12**

The racers are glad to be through that section and by now have a good idea of the quality of their race run. Lets look a little more closely at the



penalties. The upstream gates are an easy place to touch, since the boat is spinning quickly. Here I touched the midstream pole. Watch the judge right there signal my touch. The judges have the best view of every gate, and they don't miss much."

#### **Around gate 14**



"You can see my split time on this clock. A good split will get a good roar from the crowd and charge up a paddler as they approach the upstreams here. Here the water again is more difficult. The current pushes the boat around, and it takes a lot of strength to keep the boat on line. Here is where fitness level starts to separate the racers."

#### **Around 16**

"There is one more tricky water feature here at the bottom part of the course. It is a huge hole, probably the last upstream on the course. The water is unpredictable here, so it is the final technical challenge for the racers, as they try to get on the fastest line. We will see Olympic medals won and lost at this spot."

#### **Around 20**

"Now it is just a sprint to the finish. The gates make me scramble a bit, and the waves are really big here, so it is easy to get tossed off line, or take a wave in the chest, which slows the boat. The finish horn sounds, and the racer looks up and gets instant feedback on 4 years of training, and 100 seconds of racing. There will be some raw emotion here at the finish."

**End of my run**  
Kent Ford

## **Kent Ford: Boater/Writer/Producer**

Kent Ford's highly acclaimed books, video's and instruction have made him one of the most recognized paddlers in whitewater sport worldwide. Kent's unique background includes twenty years of international whitewater racing and coaching, combined with similar experience teaching recreational boating to all levels of paddlers. His fourteen video's and books on paddlesports have influenced the education of half a million paddlers.

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Kent's paddling resume includes ten years as an instructor and several as manager for the Nantahala Outdoor Center, which is the largest canoe/kayak school in the World. A member of the U.S. Whitewater Team almost every year since 1977, Kent posted several top 7 finishes in World Championships and was twice World Champion in C-1 slalom team. He worked as the public address announcer at the last three Olympics and several World Championships. Kent has worked as an assistant coach for the Whitewater Slalom World Championships and as head Coach for the US Junior Team.

Kent is the technical producer of fourteen instructional books and video's known worldwide as the best instructional video's in outdoor sports. These include: Whitewater Self Defense, The Kayaker's Edge, Solo Playboating!, Performance Sea Kayaking, and Performance Mountain Biking.

A veteran of over 330 rivers in 27 countries, Kent has been a member of expeditions to the Soviet Union, Costa Rica, Turkey, and Mexico. Kent holds a BS. in Mechanical Engineering from Carnegie-Mellon University and resides in Durango, Colorado.





# Elkhorn Update

Nathan Depenbrock

We wanted to take an opportunity to update everyone on the most current information on the Jim Beam dam, its potential removal as well as any other Forks of Elkhorn pertinent information. First and foremost, thank you all so much for the opportunity to speak at your meeting a while back & with any updates we had. It seems the message was received, as we did have a very unified voice going back to Jim Beam, rather than scattered hear-say and online conversations that may have derailed the process.

As of early November, we had been told that the linear project that needed to be completed before dam removal could be considered, had been engineered and worked on. In anticipation of dam removal, Jim Beam had on site meetings with representatives from Ky Fish and Wildlife and US Fish and Wildlife, as well as Kentucky American Water and other stream related local entities. Public notice was also posted in the Frankfort State Journal of potential impacts and asking for any concerned parties to submit in writing their concerns. All of these developments lead us to believe that it is looking more likely this will really happen!

As far as a timeline, we were told removal would hopefully be anytime between fall of 2020 and Spring of 2021. These are estimates based upon other projects as well as removal team scheduling. But again, this is the closest we have ever gotten and all signs point to this occurring in the 2021 season, barring anything COVID related impacting it.

**Other news on the Forks of Elkhorn:** It has been noted by many the increase in traffic on the Elkhorn this year from private boaters. It seems that the creek was where everyone went with all the local pools and other outdoor activities closed. We do not expect this to be any different in 2021. We were happy to see that areas of the creek that are boat in only, were not impacted too much more by trash; hike in areas are a different story. We did host two cleanups on the creek with KWA this year, and one on the Kentucky River. We ask that you continue to keep an eye out for trash areas, and if you cannot take it out yourself, please inform us at Canoe Kentucky and we will send in crews to remove as much as we can. This is especially true of the hike in areas.

With an increase in users, we ask that all competent boaters take the time to make sure you help others safely participate. Lack of PFD's this year was the scariest thing, so we can all take the time to at least advise people to wear theirs. Canoe KY does have a "FREE PFD LOANER STATION" at Knights Bridge, accessible from the AW parking lot, so refer people there if they do not have one to use. Also, increase in use means overuse of the Saufleys Bottom Take Out, or Church's Grove Take-out on Peaks Mill Road. We highly encourage all to use the lot at AW as to ease pressure in this spot, which in turn, keeps locals happy with boaters, who are getting frustrated, rightfully so, with the heavy traffic on the side of the road.

Lastly, the old church in the Forks of Elkhorn, the one on the main Elkhorn Side directly near Church Wave, has sold to a local business, who are paddlers! They are interested in renting our spaces to businesses who want a creek side location. They have talked of ice cream shop, micro brews, restaurants, etc. They have invested a lot of money and even more sweat equity into bringing this place back and turning it in to something cool. Look them up on Instagram and Facebook @AMAonthecreek. Really good people who are gonna make the area we all love even cooler! There is a lot of potential here!

Any questions, feel free to contact us any time. We are happy to keep you all up to date and keep fighting the good fight for all boaters. My direct number is: 502 395 1535 or [nathan@canoeky.com](mailto:nathan@canoeky.com) Thanks for all your support, especially during such a trying year. We are still afloat and look forward to continue floating with you all in 2021!

# Eddy Lines of Interest

## BWA General Meeting Minutes 10//2020

### Call to Order

A virtual meeting of Bluegrass Wildwater Association was held. Meeting called to order 7:35 PM. Steering Committee Members in Attendance

Name	Office	Present	
Sandra Broadus	President	Y	
Emily Grimes	Vice President	Y	
Walt Hummel	Secretary	Y	
Kyle Koeberlein	Treasurer		
Don Spangler	Newsletter Editor		
Bob Larkin	River Conservation Liaison	Y	
Dave Foreman	Safety Officer		
Clay Warren	Program Director	Y	
Regina Hatfield	Film Festival Coordinator		
Michael Williams	Web Meister	Y	
Jansen Koeberlein	Gear Meister		
Gus Milton	Member At Large	Y	
William Samples	Membership Coordinator		
Robert Watts	Past President	Y	

### Officer Reports

- None



## BWA General Meeting Minutes 11/10/2020

A virtual meeting of Bluegrass Wildwater Association was held. Meeting called to order 7:30 PM.  
Steering Committee Members in Attendance

Name	Office	Present	
Sandra Broadus	President	Y	
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Michael Williams	Web Meister	Y	
Jansen Koeberlein	Gear Meister		
Gus Milton	Member At Large	Y	
William Samples	Membership Coordinator		
Robert Watts	Past President	Y	

### Officer Reports

- **None**

### Program

- Darcy Gaechter spoke about her experiences paddling the Amazon river from source to sea.

### Adjournment

- Meeting was adjourned on 11/10/2020 @ 8:30P.M

Walt Hummel  
11/10/2020  
Secretary