



Loma to Westwater (Colorado River)

By Gary Greeno

Trip Leader - Gary Greeno

Participants:

Dick Dieckman

Marsha Dougherty

Frank Bering

Larry Kline

Hunter Greeno

We stayed at Fruita State Park, arriving late Friday evening. We chose to do the shuttle early Sat. AM (Met at 7:30, left about 9:00AM, and returned from Westwater about 11:00).

Arrived at camp site about 2:30-3:00 PM on Saturday. It is an excellent site with a large central meeting area sheltered by a giant old cottonwood. There are nice level sandy tent sites surrounding the central area.

We had our community dinner Saturday evening around dusk. Marsha brought shrimp cocktail, Gary brought a spinach salad with sliced almonds and dried cherries and Chardonnay Wine, Larry Kline provided soup with Wild Rice, Dick Dieckman provided Macaroni and Cheese and the gourmet cook, Gary Greeno, totally ruined the noodles and steak with mushroom gravy because somehow soap contaminated his creation. Luckily, there was enough food in spite of it.

Gary's son Hunter came down from CSU and joined his dad in Gary's Pygmy Osprey tandem. It is a 22 foot long craft modeled after the

Queen Mary. They went down to the river and fished for an hour or so, but in spite of plenty of bites, were not able to hook up any volunteers for Sunday Breakfast.

We made the Black Rocks passage the following morning with catarafts and canoes appearing like magic from the shore as we approached this very picturesque area. By the time we reached the Rocks, we were amongst a flock of canoes and catarafts with their accompanying whitewater kayakers.

The rapids at the head of the Rocks presented a temporary challenge. Then Frank, Larry and Dick went



down on the left. Frank and Larry stayed and surfed in the wave train a bit, while Gary, Hunter and Marsha took the easy way down. (Right side of the Island).

Passing through the swirling hydraulics along the 300 yard stretch of the rocks was impressive. At one point, the river passes through a 12 foot wide channel where the water depth is over 60 feet deep! All along, groups of onlookers watched us go by from their vantage points on the sandy beaches scalloped out of the sides of the black, twisted pre-Cambrian basalt by the ancient contest between the river and it's black obstacle. Little kids and Dogs

waved and barked while well endowed rafters raised their beer and champagne glasses to toast our passage.

The final ten miles of the float are very flat with little current. It is here that an upstream wind can cause this section of the trip to become drudgery. We were blessed on this day, as the day was calm.

We discovered that Kayaks cannot always blow past canoes on the race to the takeout. Two out of three Kevlar canoes piloted by very savvy paddlers with superior knowledge of the river currents managed to pass our marathon Paddler, Dick Dieckman and the twin motored Queen Mary and reach the takeout first. The winning team was gracious and made us feel better by admiring our home made pygmy boats.

The afternoon return to Denver was uneventful. We unfortunately did not have the time to visit Frank Bering's old restaurant in Grand Junction for a final toast to the trip.

