

## Grand Canyon Diary for Spring, 2015

In this photo edition, I will first introduce all boaters and especially the RMCC people, as I am preparing this in early May of 2020 as RMCC online entertainment due to the coronavirus. Photos will focus on best and RMCC'ers when good.

Here are the RMCC people:

Me - Karen Amundson - mostly solo rubber duckie (all rapids class 1-5 and half the 6's) - full trip

Bill Rivers - C1 - full trip

Carol and Werner Duecker - tandem duckie - full trip

Mat Bozek, Chris Franciol, Scott McDonald (solo canoe) and Wendy Phillips) - first 8.5 days

Bill and Kathie Ashworth, Jeanne Willson and Tom Jacklin - last 12 days

Here are the mostly rafting people, in the 18' Moenkopi rafts:

Alisa Mast - raft, with Jim Coogan - kayak

Dave Neff and Claire Carren alternating days in raft and kayak

Bob - raft - and Chris Newman - masthead

Gary Probst - 75 year old raft guy is a neighbor of Candace's in Breck

4-16: Left work at 2:30, picked up 3 missing items at home, then 9 short straps at Downriver Equipment. Drove to GJ in tons of watery snow after stopping for Mexican food in Glenwood with Bill R. and Gary. Spent the night at Carol and Werner's place and Carol did breakfast.

4-17: Werner drove his new truck with Carol and me through snow and rain - - Moab, Bluff for lunch at Twin Rocks, and saw the Comb Ridge go all the way to Kayenta. Stopped at Cameron Trading Post for 20 post cards and at Moenkopi's warehouse to talk to Brady. Found the Riverhouse and picked up Satchmo's BBQ/creole for dinner. Nice place. Claire was wound up. \$672 more for food to Brady. Did not sleep quickly on the foam topped beds.





4-18: Did breakfast, loaded up a truck/trailer, and headed to Lee's Ferry. Put the rafts together, floated 100 yards, and set up camp. Dinner @ Marble Canyon Lodge was good, though the place burned down a



couple of years ago and we were just in a small room behind a Chevron station. Chris F. bought me a cotton shirt with western sparkes. 4 instruments came out, plus Wendy and I sang. Many Stars Dan demoed the kitchen before dinner. It was clear that we had a good group of people, tho Gary had a shoulder problem.



4-19: Dan (MOE) got us up around 5:30am, showed us how the kitchen worked while he made us coffee/tea and breakfast. We were 98% packed when the Ranger came at 9:00 and talked to us until 11:15. It was pushing noon before we got started. 2 rafts had problems with oarlocks moving out of position. We stopped at Cathedral "canyon" at 2.8 for lunch and a hike. I took the duckie from Chris F. and enjoyed being solo and in control of my position on the river. Jim and Mat boosted my ego by calling me "Admiral" and "Fearless Leader". We ran Badger Rapid at 7.8 and everyone made it thru successfully in spite of huge waves across the whole river and a 15' drop over about 80 yards. We pulled over on the left to camp at 4:20 on a lovely beach. Short of the itinerary camp due to the talkative ranger. Chris F., Mat, and I did appetizers and dinner, working our butts off from 4:30 to 8:00 with barely time to unload our gear and set up a tent. We were somewhat frustrated when Judy (and Alisa some) wanted to push for the kitchen group to wash all pots and pans. Will come up with a solution in the morning. Early to bed.





4-20: Did several rapids today including a scout of House Rock Rapid. Consequences looked nasty, so we (4 small boats) portaged on river right. We saw 2 condors flying high overhead early morning. On Redneck Rapid, I slid down the face of the 4th wave (humongous). I was surfing for a while in the trough; it then turned me sideways and I thought I was a goner, but it spit me out. Jim then went to surf it. He said I was in it for 20 seconds and he for 7. Then in 21 Mile (?) Rapid, Werner/Wendy and Bill flipped. She was coughing up dry water for ~ 30 minutes. At appetizers, I pulled out the Margarita mix and special salt and it was very popular. We camped at Lone Cedar Camp.

4-21: Werner/Carol flipped once, and Bill several times as his C-1 does not balance easily and the huge waves and swirling water are hard to manage. I got to pull Bill out of the water and into the raft once. Then watched him do an alligator launch from the raft into the water. We stopped at Silver Grotto for lunch and a hike. Due to the technical nature of the hike, I stayed with the boats and watched for raft parties. I saw just 1 pair of commercial rafts and told them we would be in the South Canyon camp. Soon a raven came and looked for food. I chased him repeatedly with a handful of sticks and a kayak paddle. Finally the others returned from very cold pools and slick technical moves. We hoofed it to South Canyon and found it empty! A lovely camp with a series of sandy nooks for tents. I took a solar shower. Then hiked up to petroglyphs, ruins and a cave that opened to a view of a slot canyon that was stunning. Many flowers and cactus were blooming. Judy and Claire separately told me that we needed to talk about itinerary (hikes and camps) the

night before, so we did. Another nice fire. We started thinking about shipping Bill's boat out by mule.



4-22: A fairly easy day. 2 class 4's. Nobody flipped in them, but Chris F. fell out of the solo duckie in an unnamed rapid. Redwall Cavern was great. We played Bocce and sang songs. We had riotous laughter

around the campfire with talk of lighting farts on fire, Claire's scream, and stories of disaster river trips. Our beautiful camp was Eminence. Nautiloid hike was skipped by all and I skipped the climb at camp.



4-23: Left before 9am and rode tandem duckie with Carol. Fun. We all went up Saddle Canyon to a lush



paradise of flowers (columbines, century plants, barrel and prickly pear cactus, maidenhair fern, "daisies"),





others) crossed a tiny creek many times then had to wade up to the knees (changed to water shoes) and up to the hips to get to the 1st waterfall. Several people climbed up the side of that to get to another pool and waterfall. We switched duckie riders and got to the Nankoweap hike. It was windy, so we skipped it; got to Kwagunt Camp at ~ 4:00. Found the postcards finally. My horse shoes talent is gone.



4-24: Broke camp at 9:30 as several of us took a short hike around breakfast. Went 5.5 miles to the confluence with the Little Colorado River. It was an almost glowing sky blue color. We hiked up 1/2 mile



or so and then floated down some mild chutes. Much fun. Caught up with Mat and Gary who had somehow missed catching the eddy. Decided to go the final 2.5 miles to camp instead of pulling over for lunch. But it got VERY windy and we did not get there until 2pm. Had bagels and lox. Yum! It was Chris F., Mat and I

doing dinner. We were chased to bed early by some rain. This was at Carbon Camp. It was VERY windy off and on. Werner and I called Brady to give him Ashworths' phone numbers and tell them to pick up 2-3 potholders to replace ones we had burned up. Also asked him if we could send Bill's boat out at Phantom Ranch and he said they do not accept anything that big.



4-25: Broke camp at 9:00 and I took the solo duckie for the whole day, through 2 class 4's and Unkar Rapid - 6. Still have not flipped.... knock on wood and keep praying to the water sprites. Again we pushed through to camp for lunch, this time arriving at 1:40. We finished our kitchen duty at lunch time, so now I get 4 days off... but there are lots of other things to do. Will write postcards now. It is very rainy, so not a good day to try bocce. We set up the expedition rain fly. Upper Rattlesnake Camp. Wrote a limerick for tomorrow eve's party:

***There were a dozen folks could canoe***

***And to them the Grand Canyon was new***

***So we played and we laughed***

***With the ones who could raft***

***But the rapids were hard.... and fun too!***

4-26: I rode in Dave's raft with my duckie rolled up on Alisa's boat. We ran Nevills (6) and then scouted Hance (8) for a long time. It had several big holes and was clearly making the oarsmen nervous. Scott portaged a small section. Mat helped Bill portage the whole thing. Dave had the perfect line - - nary a splash. Had to help Judy get unstuck from a couple of shallow rocks at the bottom of the rapid. Gary hit a couple of holes. Likewise, all went well in Sockdolager (7). Bill's C-1 was on the back of Dave's boat, and Scott had to run it as it was not portagable. He looked good. We had lunch above Grapevine (7) and then ran it.

On to Upper Clear Creek camp where about 20 of us hiked over some rugged rocks and up a small stream to a double waterfall. 1 part was squirting out sideways. And did another 1/2 mile of the river to the



Zoroaster camp. Tents were closer together as the steep canyon walls do not give much room for camps in this part of the river. At least a dozen limericks (about people and things on our trip) were told. Mat, Alisa, Jim, Chris N., Chris F., Scott, Judy, Dave, Claire and myself all had at least 1 told. Wendy had made up 2 songs. Bob brought out the harmonica. Another nice fire, and weather was good even if a bit windy. What a day! Scott was given 3 cheers as paddler of the day. He went his 8 days without a single flip.

4-27: Gary, Bob, and Judy took all of those hiking out plus me and Bill R. the 3.3 miles to Phantom Ranch's

boat beach. I walked up to the "Ranch" and mailed 27 postcards. Others filled water jugs and made phone calls. Then Tom, Jeanne, and the Ashworths arrived at 10:15 or so. It took Scott and Wendy almost 2 hours



to pack it up and leave. We finally paddled down and scouted Horn Rapid. Alisa ran it just right of the right "horn" (pourover rock). Then Claire overcompensated and ran over the left horn. All hell broke loose as this was not a good place. Much turbulence, then Claire yelled "Oh shit" and was launched into the water. I crab walked backward as fast as I could. Tried to get control of the oars, but it was tough as 1 oarlock had leaned over some and the oar was not in the oarlock correctly. I could see Claire, but not get into the 1st eddie. But she had a good spot to climb out so I went into the next eddie. Dave came over to help, and Claire climbed over a 25' rock. We made it down to the Granite camp and shared with ~ 8 backpackers. Good energy at appetizers, dinner, and around the fire. But my new kayak paddle was broken in the rapid.

4-28: I rode the raft all day as we had 3 class 8's and a 7; plus a few 5's and 6's. Went thru the Gems: Ruby, Sapphire, Emerald, CRYSTAL, and Serpentine. Tom portaged a bit, but was putting on a show he was so good. Bill did good for half of the 14 mile day, then jumped on the raft with Dave and me. Found out a BIG commercial pair of huge rafts was going to the Bass camp, so we stopped at Hotauta (2 nights). Oarsmen were nervous. Gary flipped out of the boat at Crystal, and Bill/Kathy did not know it until they saw Gary float past them. Bill A. jumped on the oars. He has experience from decades ago. This was the



longest that Gary has ever swum. Then just 1 or 2 rapids later he fell out again and Kathy pulled him in! The oars people had been pretty rude and chewing on the newbies (Ashworths, Tom and Jeanne), so I had to give a talk to the full group and introduce each of them with some praise-filled labels. Then took a vote on whether to layover or not. We voted to spend 2 nights. Quite a day.



4-29: We got up, had a great breakfast, and all headed off on hikes 2 or 3 or 4 at a time. Jeanne, Carol and

I got the view into the Shimuno Creek valley and then turned back as we were hot-tired-injured (Carol)



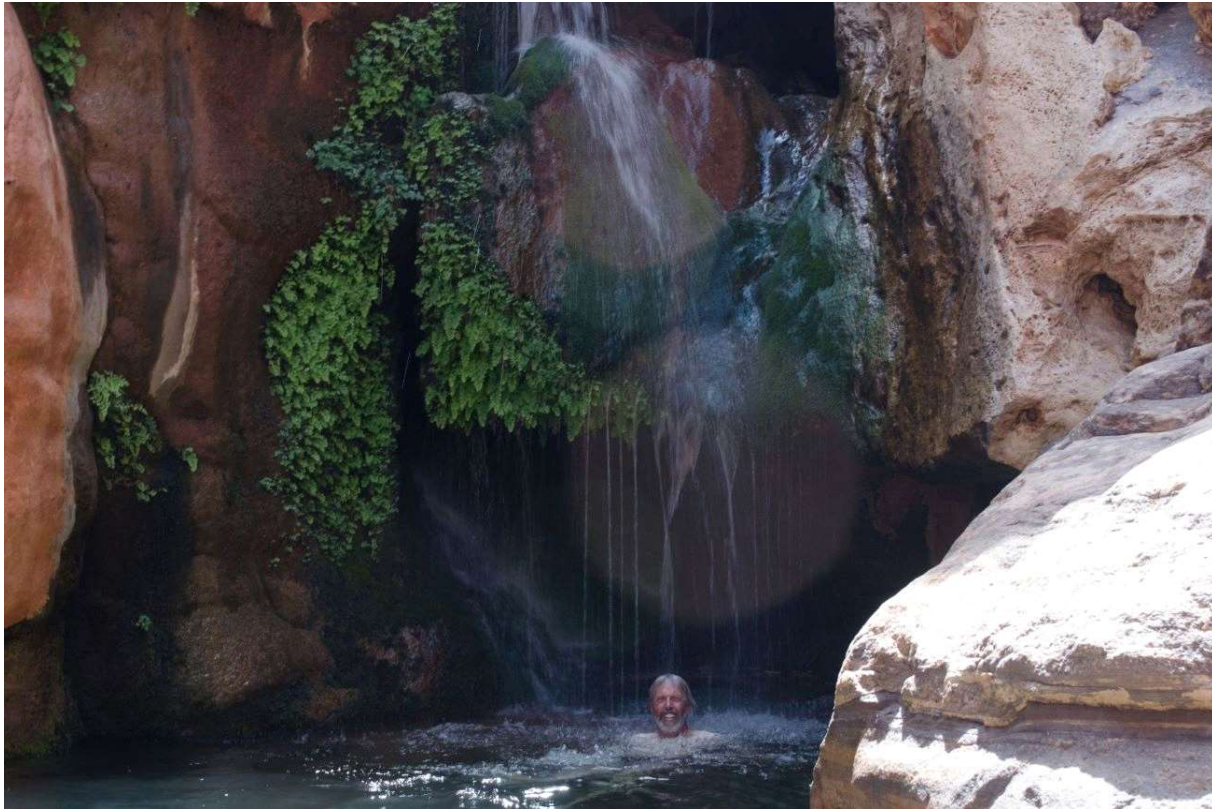
and short on water. The Ashworths, Werner, Tom, and Gary continued to the creek, and Werner went on

from there. Jeanne, Carol, and I had a talk about all of the oars peoples' personalities on the way back in partial shade. Bill R. had stayed in camp. Tom, Jeanne, and I cooked tilapia for dinner. Yum! Music was good. Around 2:00 Carol, Bill, and I coached the 4 newbies on what to do or not do to fit in.



4-30: Back to the river after a much-needed layover. Lots of smaller rapids + 1 class 6 that we could sneak on the far right. We stopped pretty soon at Shimuno Creek and went the 200 yards up to the falls. Nice.

Then had lunch at Elves Chasm and all but Jeanne hiked up to the mid falls/pool while the Oars 'A' team took



a throw rope and belayed far above for 3 hours. Jeanne had somehow sprained 3 fingers, cut another, and was having allergy problems (that she never has normally). At the 'mid' pool, we all dove in and swam to the waterfall even tho the water was cold. With the 'A' team taking 3 hours instead of 2, and unsure of whether



anyone had taken Upper Blacktail, we stopped at Hundred Twenty Mile Camp instead of Blacktail. It was nice and big, and we played the 'Fantasy' game led by Judy around another nice campfire.



May 1! First we stopped at Blacktail and the ladies sang. It is known for its acoustics and some special recordings have been done there. We did ~ 13 miles, ending in Talking Heads Camp. A bit tight, but nice. Lots of rapids including Specter (6), Bedrock (7), and Deubendorff (7). I rode on Alisa's raft. Bedrock has the

most flips of any rapid in the GC. All passengers except Chris N. walked it. Bob ran Gary's boat as he had big trouble on his last 2 runs there. Kathy's big toe is all swollen. Bob gave her antibiotic pills. Hopefully that works.

5-2: Got up and paddled a mile to Tapeats Creek where we dropped off Dave, Chris, Jim, Werner, Carol, and Bill R. to do an out and over from there to Deer Creek. They made a couple of wrong turns, so it was





10 miles and 1500' of gain. Dave did some dangerous move where Thunder River bursts out of a cave. In the meantime, Tom and I and the rafts went thru a class 5 below Tapeats and a couple of smaller rapids,

coming to Deer Creek. We (mostly Judy, Alisa and Bob) filled water jugs and climbed up to the "Patios" - a lovely spot where the creek does a couple of waterfalls and enters the slot canyon. I played Bananagrams with Claire. Then Judy, Alisa, and Jeanne all returned from a further hike and we all took a nap. About 2:30 or 3, Jeanne and I headed down. Bob and Judy caught up. We loaded PFD's onto the correct rafts and kitchen stuff onto Bob and Judy's and headed over to OC's Camp. Washed clothes and my hair and had a good dinner and music. The 6 hikers were 2 hours behind us. Also a few hundred yards after the Tapeats drop-off, we stopped at a big cave on the right and climbed up to the "Xmas Tree" formation. It was a



Stalacmite with lots of ornate tiny branches sticking out. Thanks to Claire for inspiring me to do the climb.



5-3: Only a few miles today as the focus would be on hiking Kanab Creek. But Doris Rapid threw us off because Tom, Werner, and Bill decided to portage it and so I followed suit. It was a difficult portage and it turned out we could have run it down the middle easily. 20 minutes delay. We got to Kanab Creek at 10:30 and finally left at 3:30. Toward the end, a huge wind blew in. Didn't look like we would be able to get to the

rapid's entry at river left, so we portaged. Missed getting the Above Olo camp and settled for Olo. Some tension over whether the group would do Olo in the morning. We set up the MOE tarp for rain, but later winds got so bad that we had to take it down. LOTS of sand in the tent. 4 of our tents were right in a row on a narrow piece of sand, and others found further places that were not so windy.

5-4: Decided to skip Olo, do Madkat, and camp before Havasu. But there was a big commercial boat in the mouth of the creek and Bob was the only 1 capable of getting in. We threw ropes, but both were misses. So 2 or 300 yards below Madkat, Claire was pushing me to jump out and hold the boat - even tho there was not any eddy. I hesitated, then jumped and immediately was flat on the ground. Held on. But we could not find a path up to Matkat. So we went down to where Alisa landed. Everyone caught up, and we decided to go to Havasu followed by camping just downstream. But we got to a place with several camps and chose Last Chance; our kitchen team - Tom, Jeanne and I did dinner. Nice camp.

5-5: Broke camp at 8:30; fastest start we have made. Went the mile to Havasu and landed 5 rafts and 3



small boats without mishap even tho the creek tries to push you out. Used a 2 hour time limit. People were all over the board on wanting to stop or not and caused a hubbub in the morning with too many conflicting ideas. Water was very blue and there were dozens of blue-headed suckers swimming near the mouth of the creek. I hiked mostly with Kathy, Bill A., and Tom. After a while a couple of commercial groups filled the



canyon. A guy came up and said I was half unzipped (fanny pack) and I let him zip it. Turned out it was Blake (and Rosemary) leading a CMC trip!! I got back to the boats and Alisa had blown up my duckie! As rafts were leaving, Bill R. and I paddled up the Havasu Creek. Very magical. We went 6 or 8 miles and



found the Tuckup Camp and settled in. 10 people hiked up Tuckup Canyon. Nice weather and early arrival let me do laundry, wash my hair, and fix my chair bag. Lava tomorrow.



5-6: We were ready to leave before 8:30, but had Claire give a safety talk. We stopped at the National Canyon camps and decided the 1 in the mouth of the canyon was too rocky (had a rockfall 2-3 years ago), but the downstream camp would be good for future reference. The canyon looked interesting. Then we stopped at 10:20 at Mohawk and gave people an hour to hike up a dry creek and into the narrows. It is on Hualapai land, so technically we needed a permit. Had lunch and got going and soon it was windy. Had to go another 8 miles to Lava Falls. I rowed 6+ of the miles. We all got there and scouted on the right. Jeanne and the Ashworths walked the rapid (Alisa not wanting responsibility of a passenger and Gary getting sick). Tom and Bill R. portaged on the left. When we got back to the boats, Gary was throwing up and I asked if he needed someone to run the boat. He did. We lined up Bob. 4 boats (rafts) went thru about 30+ seconds apart. Bob, then Judy, then Dave, and Alisa. All made it fine, with the 1st 3 at river right and Alisa at right center where her Teacup' run purposefully hit a hole but was smooth after that. FYI - it takes 20 seconds to run Lava Falls. Dave and I went thru about 6 big waves, and the last 1 got WAY over my head and crashed on us. We almost touched the cheese grater rock. Some hang time at the last wave, but it was a good run. We got Jeanne and Kathy into Dave's raft and did the Son of Lava rapid, stopping below at Tequila Beach - AKA After Lava Camp. Had some whiskey that was passed around. Decided to stay there as the Chevron sites would be taken by commercial rafts who would want the helipad in the morning and it was 6 miles to the next available camps.









5-7: We got going too quickly (had tried to do a more relaxed start for Bob, Chris and me) and therefore

were on the river at 8:45. First we went to Whitmore Canyon and looked at petroglyphs (photo fit better up above). Then 2 boats looked at the world's (?) largest barrel cactus. It was 8' tall. On to 193 Canyon where we hiked up a dry river bed and to a narrow slot canyon. Winds picked up. We paddled hard to go the 9 miles to 202 camp and found it occupied. Then we picked a camp on river left across from 202. But it was hard to access and had a view of the 202 camp so we abandoned it. Looked for 203 camp and could not find it. 204.5 'camp' on Spring Creek did not exist because it was really just a place to pump water. So after looking at a couple more spots, I rolled up my duckie, Bill R. put his C-1 on a raft, and we went to run Kolb Rapid (6). Bob gave me a very smooth ride. All went to sleep early. We had no fire because of the wind. It was a 25 mile day, half in the wind. Stayed at 205 mile camp, just below Kolb Rapid.

5-8: Left early again in the wind, but the rain had just stopped. Pretty cold too. We went 4 miles to the Granite Park Camp where Judy and Midnight had been married (years before) in costume clothing with inexpensive turquoise rings from Marble Canyon Lodge's Trading Post. We watched the OARS rafts go thru a class 5 and followed them. Then we went to the rock sculptures at 212.8, 1/2 mile above Pumpkin Springs and watched Dave, Alisa and Chris N. crawl thru irregular vertical tubes of rock; and we also





stopped at Pumpkin Springs. Weather came and went and helped us decide to have a snack and go to camp to have our lunch. We enjoyed Upper 220 camp as it was very big and had Mesquite trees and cactus/rock gardens. A blue heron flew right over us in camp and later landed on 1 of the rafts. Last horseshoes, hike and dinner. Bigger fire than usual. Gary put a can of cooking oil in the fire and when it was heavily boiling he added water. Flames shot up 8' high. Judy thanked me for doing a good trip as we were all seated around the fire. Then I thanked the oarsmen and Claire put in a positive word for all the small boats. All was good finally. Tom had worn 1 of Scott's paddles all the way thru, and late afternoon was a mile behind and portaging everything due to not having a paddle to trust.





5-9: Planned to hop on the river at 8:30 or 8:45, but everyone was moving fast so we started at 8am. Judy was pushing out her raft and lost a flip flop and ended in the water with Jeanne trying to row back to shore. Bob gave Judy a lift to her boat. It was cold. Many of us had worn our down jackets the prior night for the first time on the trip. Dave stopped at a couple of camps to check them out. We were delaying because the Havasupai do not want you at Diamond Creek before 10am. Claire took the oars to warm up by rowing from bank to bank. Diamond Peak stood out prominently. We landed 10 minutes early as there was no action on the takeout beach. It took almost an hour to de-rig. Brady finally showed up and said I had asked for him there at 11am. We deflated boats, loaded it all up, replaced a missing trailer spring with a rock, and did 1.5 hours on the gravel road to Peach Springs. Stopped at a pizza place in Seligman run by a Norwegian biker lady. Got to the Riverhouse where we picked out free T-shirts and where Judy, Bob, Chris, Alisa, and Jim headed home. The rest of us had a nice crab boil done by Brady and enjoyed having bedrooms for everyone.

5-10: Got up about 6am, fixed coffee/tea to go, and the 5 of us in Bill R. and Werner's vehicles headed to the Desert Deli in Cameron for a burrito breakfast. A character there talked our ears off. The 2 cars separated as the Dueckers and I went to the Cameron Trading Post for gifts for the ladies at my work place. Then it was a long drive, going thru Monument Valley this time. We saw Bill's canoes in Moab, but went to the Eclectic Cafe instead and had a good lunch. Got to Grand Junction around 4pm and loaded stuff into my car. I never got sleepy. Picked up nuts and dessert in the Frisco Safeway and called it dinner. Got to 6 miles from the Eisenhower Tunnel and it was stopped. Lots of snow there and Vail Pass, but the roads were not

bad. Bill had ended up right behind me. After we got to Georgetown, I called Bill and we talked for a good half hour in thick, dark traffic. Got home at 9:30 and was in bed, exhausted, at 10pm. What a trip!!!



*May 6th, 2020: I wish I were back on the river.*

*Karen A.*

