

A Trip Worth Reporting: Double Header on Clear Creek

(A Story in Three Parts)

Part I: Clear Creek, March 13, 2018

by Mack O'Rear

Hello Nashville Paddlers. I'm Mack O'Rear, a retired attorney from Chattanooga who recently had my 70th birthday. I've been an active member of the Tennessee Valley Canoe Club since 1996. I consider myself an avid paddler with a good knowledge of rivers and adequate skills for Class IV paddling. I'm well equipped with the proper gear (Yea! Jackson Kayak) and paddle with good safety equipment. I have taught at the TVCC Paddle School on all levels for over 20 years and I am known in our club as a good mentor for new paddlers. Since retiring, I have been the default paddle buddy for mid-week paddling, which is what led to our being on Clear Creek on March 13, 2018.

I agreed to show a high school senior and good paddler, Alex Cresswell, down Clear Creek from Jett to Nemo for his first time. He lives right by the Tellico and is very capable of running the Ledges, the Ocoee, Upper Ocoee and Rock Island at two generators. A third experienced paddler was expected but bailed at the last minute. I usually insist on three paddlers on a remote river.

What went wrong:

I confess to not having worked on my offside roll like I should have and when I flipped (which can happen to all of us) at the right side entrance to Wooten's Folly, the shots I was taking made an onside roll impossible. I've run it many times and mostly down the left side entrance, which now I highly recommend. The last trip I boofed the right side and quickly ferried over to the good left wave train and planned to do the same this time. So when you hear someone say that their onside roll is 99 percent (like mine) and they don't practice their offside roll, have them read this report!

What went right:

I was aware of the dangerous undercut on the right and knew better than to fiddle around trying to find an offside roll. I ejected and swam like a mother%&#^r to the left, a decision I contribute to saving my life. The dry suit was worth the price and the swim was a success. The kid ran it fine, ferried left, made sure I was ok and brought me my paddle.

What went wrong:

My Jackson Zen found the undercut and dove right in it.

What went right:

We evaluated the location of the boat, determined there was absolutely no safe way for us at that moment to get a rope on the boat and decided I would bushwhack to Lilly. We watched the boat for 30 minutes to see if it would flush and waited for more paddlers to escort the kid down for his first trip to Nemo.



Mack O'Rear's Jackson Kayak Zen pinned at Wooten's Folly.

What matters:

It's only a boat and I can well afford to buy another one!

What really sucked:

That bushwack was just plain awfull!

Why I like kayakers:

I was dying of thirst after that hike from Hell and asked a kayaker for some water while I waited for my ride. It turned out to be Rodney Rayder. He gave me the best Mountain Dew I have ever tasted, made sure I had a ride coming and mentioned that he would take a look at my boat on his next day paddle.

Why I especially like Rodney Rayder and Russ Corbett:

Those guys! With two hours of labor and many safety skills, they got my boat out! A pitiful blind, stray dog that must have been starving also appeared at the rapid. Alex had seen the dog the day before on his way out. Those guys! They used my boat to float the mutt out and save his life. They have a great report on Facebook with pictures which would be worth joining Facebook to see. They gave the poor dog a seat in my Zen, rafted up, and each had a hand paddle on each side to try to navigate those lower rapids while keeping the dog calm in the middle. They say they made it without any swims, human or canine. I nearly cried when I saw their picture of the dog, fed and resting in their truck!

Moral of the story:

Know what you are doing and do what you know . . . and never forget that this is a dangerous sport that can kill you if you don't.

Keep reading! It gets even better!!

PART II: Clear Creek, March 14, 2018

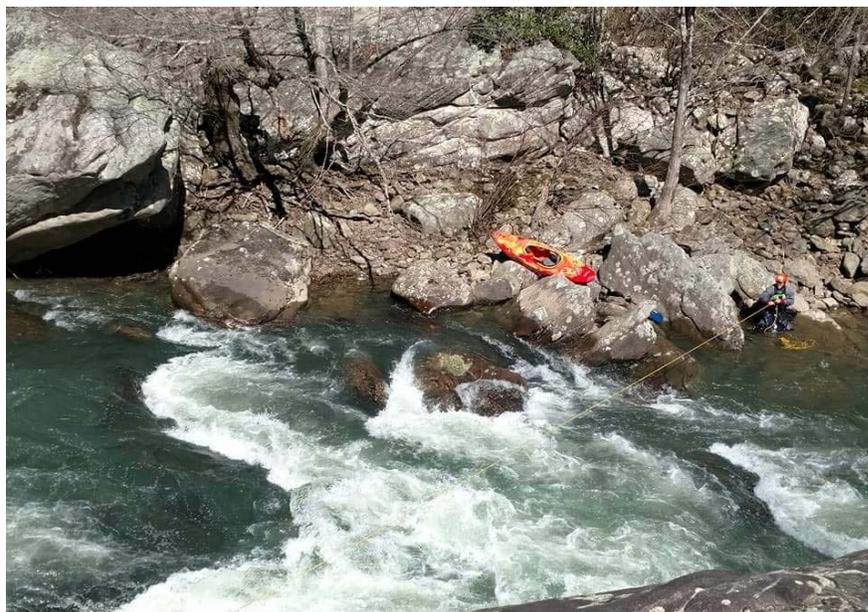
by Rodney Rayder

Hello, my name is Rodney Rayder. I paddle Clear Creek about 20 times a year. Me and Russ Corbett paddled last Tuesday (March 13th) to find a dog stuck on a rock. We had no way to get it in our kayaks. I told Russ we had to come back to get him.

Later that day we met Mack O'Rear at the put in and he told us how he had to hike out and had left his boat pinned at Wooten's Folly. I told him I was paddling back in the next morning to get a dog and I would try and unpin his boat. We used our swift water rescue skills to get the boat unpinned. It took about 2 hours.



Rodney Rayder and Russ Corbett retrieving Mack O'Rear's Zen on Clear Creek.



We got the boat and pulled it about 4 miles until we reached the dog. He was very happy to hear us coming. I fed him some beef jerky to let him know we were there to help. It turns out he is blind and must have gotten washed down. He was in bad need of help.

We put the dog in the extra kayak. It was very unstable so we got on each side of the boat to raft up and put our paddles in the boat to keep the dog from falling out. We used our backup hand paddles and got on each side of the boat and held on.

We paddled about three miles out through some class II-III rapids trying to navigate them as best we could. We had to stop twice to drain the dog's boat. We were gonna do what we had to do to get the dog to the take out safely. We were just doing what any boater should do. When I see someone or an animal in need of help and I feel like I can help, I try to help out.



Rescuing the stranded dog.



Exhausted but safe rescuee.

Keep Reading!

Part III: The Pupdate

by Stephanie Anderson

March 14, 2018:

My boyfriend is seriously my hero. After seeing a dog stuck on a ledge, hurt, and stranded while he was kayaking yesterday, he kayaked back in today to get the dog out. Is there such a thing as a best boyfriend award?

March 14

Looking for the owner. Dog was rescued between Lilly Bluff and Nemo in Wartburg. He is blind. His nails are trimmed. He's otherwise healthy looking. We will be going in the morning to check for a chip. His belly is full for the night and he's safe and warm.

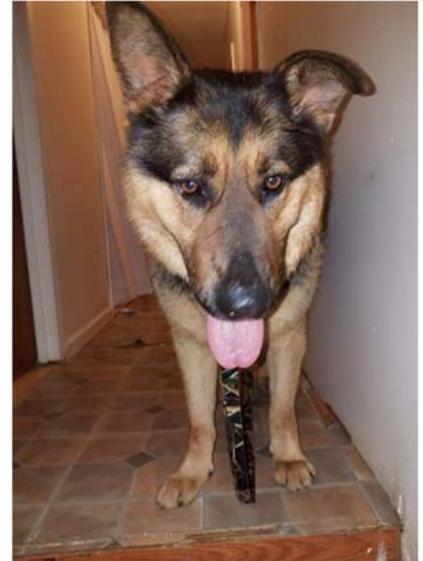
March 15

Update on the boy that was rescued. He has no collar and no chip. He weighs 99 pounds. And he has a vet appointment in Wartburg at 9:30 in the morning. I do have several sweet people who work with rescues and are willing to step up and help with the vet care.

March 16

So we just left the vet with the gentle giant. He seems to be feeling a bit better. Heartworm test came back negative. We went ahead and got his rabies and distemper vaccine. It did come back that he has Lyme disease and hookworms. He is now being treated for these. The doctor said that he is about 4 to 6 years old.

We are still looking for the owners. But he will hopefully be going into the German Shepherd Rescue of East Tennessee if we're unable to find the owners. They do need fosters also. Any donations for him should be directed to them. They have a [PayPal](#) account under their email of gdsrescueofeasttn@gmail.com.



Rescuee is back from the vet.

From the German Shepherd Rescue of East Tennessee

March 14

Very large German Shepherd found along the Obed River near Nemo in Wartburg, TN today. Looking for his owner. He is safe but does have some minor injuries. He is believed to be blind or have some vision impairment, which may explain how he ended up where he was found.

After 1,072 Shares on Facebook:

March 16: The owner has contacted us!!!!

They explained that he has recently been suffering from seizures and feel it is best to allow the rescue to find him a new home where he can receive the attention and care he needs. He had managed to get out of their fenced backyard. We believe he became disoriented and lost after having a seizure. He loves water and may have been swept down river after either falling in or getting in on his own and not realizing how strong the current was.

If anyone would like to donate toward his care, we would really appreciate it, especially since he will need blood work and medication for his seizures. He went to the vet today for vaccines and tested positive for Lyme disease. We already started him on medication for that. He will also need to be neutered before being adopted. Donations can be made via [PayPal](#) to gsdrescueofeasttn@gmail.com.

If anyone is interested in giving this big guy a new home, please contact the rescue at gsdrescueofeasttn@gmail.com. We do require all of our dogs to be inside dogs and we only adopt to locations within two hours of Knoxville, TN.