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## Broad River Flood Trip

By Roger Thomas

Rain during the weekend of August 22-23 caused the river to flood. On Sunday it was 9 feet on the gauge painted on the GA 281 bridge. On Monday, August 24, Cheryl Young and I loaded up our OC-1s and drove to see whether we might want to try paddling. After looking at the river, which was at 6.5 feet on the 281 gauge, we were cautiously approaching a decision whether to paddle, when it became possible to join some other well equipped paddlers to share safety backup. I didn't get all the names, but Lorin Moores in a K-1 was with a group of three other K-1s and one C-1 paddler. Lorin said one of the kayakers, Mark, was a Gauley River guide, and Mark proved to be an excellent paddler.

The first rapid, Flat Shoals, is about 1.25 miles below the GA 281 bridge. Its most interesting route normally involves two drops that might make a class II. At 6.5 feet, it was a III-IV due to long powerful waves with some maneuvering required. Scarborough Shoals (usually identified as "lunchstop rock" in The Eddy Line reports) is the next named set of shoals, and it is about 3 miles below 281. Ordinarily, Scarborough is a moderately technical II; at 6.5 feet, it was a II-III.

Brown Shoals is the next named and next-to-last set of shoals on the Broad River section between GA 281 and GA 172. It is about 1.5 miles above the GA 172 bridge and is about a quarter of a mile below the natural gas pipelines that cross beneath the river bed. Brown Shoals is recognizable by an island, to the right of which are the three small parallel ledges (which some publications have classified as II-III at normal water levels). To the left of the island is ordinarily an easy but enjoyable set of two or three small drops (I-II), depending upon which of two or three routes one may choose to run. At 6.5 feet, Brown Shoals was a class IV to the left of the island owing to long, very powerful waves (nobody attempted or even scouted the ledges).

Compton Shoals (typically misnamed "roostertail") is about a half mile above the GA 172 bridge. The main drop down river right was a class IV-V at 6.5 feet. An alternative run to the left of the main drop was a IV. We scouted Compton Shoals from the island that overlooks it. The island is privately owned; it holds a deck that was constructed about five years ago, and the island is now well marked with "no trespassing" signs. However, in this potentially life threatening situation (and with the owner in absentia), we "invaded" the island to scout our runs. While we were scouting, we were joined by two more OC-1 paddlers, now making us a party of nine.

Mark was the first to run and he elected the big drop. He disappeared into its awesome waves but emerged below upright and looking like he was in complete control. Mark was followed by Curt, who also made it through with no obvious difficulty. I followed next but elected to run down the left side and had no trouble. The other two kayakers and one of the OC-1 paddlers who had joined us attempted the big drop but all swam through it involuntarily. Cheryl in her OC-1, the other OC-1 paddler, and the C-1 paddler had good runs down the left.

There were three other swims during the trip, one from a K-1 and two from the C-1. These three swims resulted from playing in hydraulics or surfing rather than from merely trying to make a run. No one was hurt and no equipment was lost in any of the swims, although it was 200 yards below Compton Shoals before we got one paddler together with his kayak and paddle again.

Everyone wore helmets and life jackets throughout, and all OC-1s had air bags fore and aft. Helmets and good floatation are highly recommended for the 6.5 foot level, and anyone attempting the Broad at that level or higher should be a strong paddler. Although neither Cheryl nor I had major difficulty, we found Brown and Compton Shoals to be highly challenging. We agreed that we were glad that we had not tried it as a party of two, and that we were fortunate to have been able to paddle with such a large and competent group.

The two OC-1 paddlers who joined us at Compton Shoals said that they had launched the day before when the river was at 9 feet. They said that they had a very rough time at Flat Shoals and that they had gotten off the river as soon thereafter as they could. They also said it was not easy to get off the river at that level. □

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## Upper Hooch

By Pat Wolfer

August 30, 1992. Weather: Sunny, hot. Unfortunately I sent my very carefully detailed list of participants to Scott with the release forms, so no one will get to see their name in this trip report. I promise I will not let this happen again. Shuttle was provided by The Wildwood Outpost, making the trip home much more pleasant. Water level was higher than I had experienced in some time. It was about a foot above the take-out platform.

We all had a very enjoyable time, with only a few mishaps. Some of our group underrate their paddling abilities and should be able to move up to places like the Nantahala and Cartecay. Thanks to everyone for joining me on this GCA trip and look forward to arranging another one in the near future! □