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A FLOATER'S GUIDE

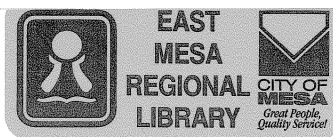


TO THE VERDE RIVER

by
Bob Williams

A FLOATER'S GUIDE TO THE VERDE RIVER

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1996



Bob Williams

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TO THE
VERDE RIVER

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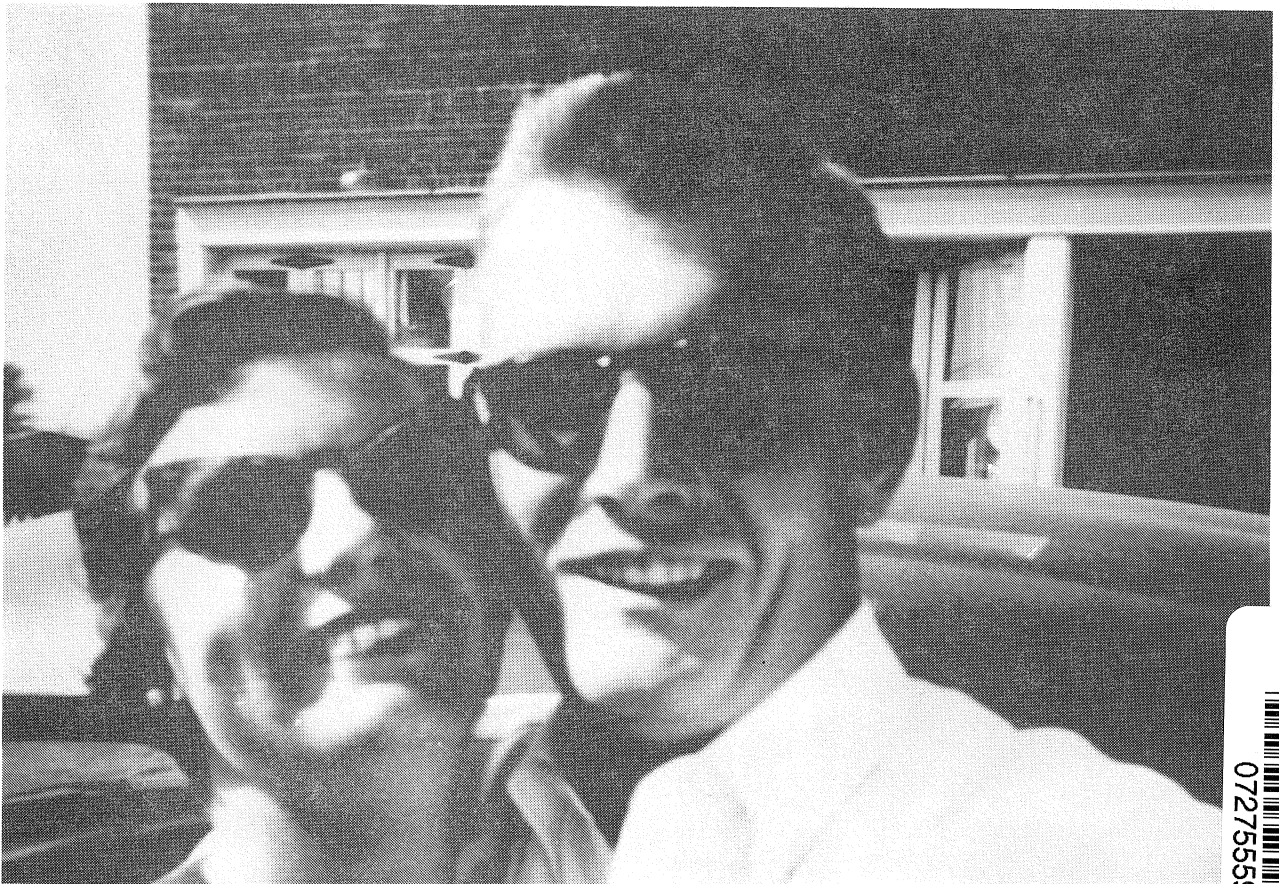


DEDICATION

To my Dad, Robert A. Williams Jr.,
who put me in a canoe at an early age,
and soon thereafter took great glee
in rolling the boat over to build character.

And, to my Mom, Anne P. Williams,
who sat upon the beach cringing and saying,
"Whatever it takes to get the sand out of your shoes!"

Your sand put the go in me.
I love you both and eternally thank you.



Mom and Dad - Circa 1953



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I also thank my dear wife, Tracy, for her encouragement during this interminable project, for her patience with my quirks, for her support for my need to go and for sharing with me her remarkable love and care. I love you, Ace.

Our daughters, Whitney and Brooke, who although too young of mind yet to know, have given immeasurably of their hearts to help me complete this project. We'll all go boating soon!

My family: Sister Becky, her husband John Ficker and sons Lee, Paul and Jake; brothers Brantley, Jonny, Tim, and his wife Anni; and sister Binnie. We six, plus the loved, know so deep in *our* sand who makes us go.

Andi Mayer who typed this book and helped give me directions and headings to reach journey's end.

Sandra Harper who did a superb job of proofreading and editing the text.

Bob and Karen Lockett and the superior crew of the Graphic Center of Prescott for preparing and printing the text and photos. A special tribute to you, Bob, my dear friend.

The following for all manner of assistance and inspiration: Bob Medlyn, Brad Newman, Deb Ford, Steve and Debbie Franks, Dan Tomlinson, Shirley Fenderson, Dave Horn, Karen Perkins, the U.S.G.S., the N.F.S., Donna Reynolds, Learah Cooper Morgan, Sharlot Hall Museum, the Prescott Public Library, Frank and Babe Daley, and all the great people whom I've met up and down the Verde.



~ Tracy ~

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INTRODUCTION

"Experience is a tough teacher. It gives the test before the lesson." (Anonymous.)

This quotation aptly sums up how I became acquainted with the Verde. The year was 1978. I was a do-it-first-think-about-it-later college student freed from the confines of academia for the summer. I needed to float off the dust and get lost for awhile. So, I rented a Coleman canoe and put-in at the White Bridge in Camp Verde with my dog, minimal gear, novice whitewater skills, and a misguided notion of boating to Phoenix.

As I recall, the trip went fairly well until I met "Off-the-Wall" rapid eleven miles downriver. I hit The Wall, rolled the boat in classic greenhorn style, took a long turbulent swim, destroyed the keel tubing on the Coleman, about drowned my dog, and soaked every open pore of my gear.

After regrouping, I limped the *Minnow* down to the Falls, took one look at the drops and said, "I'm outta here!" I carried my boat and gear up to the Falls Road, walked and hitched into town, and called my brother.

I had made every mistake in the book!

For several years, I stuck to backpacking the Verde's shores and canyons and occasionally floating the mellower stretches in an attempt to build my skills and lose the yips of that maiden voyage.

In time, I went down the Childs' run with a buddy and renewed my confidence. We lost it in two drops between Beasley and Gap Creek, but not at The Wall. I was hooked after that. In the same visceral way as an attraction to a pretty woman can start with panic and lead to permanence, so has my romance with the Verde grown. With every mile of every trip over the past ten years, I've gained greater and greater respect and reverence for The River. She'll stay tops on my float list 'till I can float no more.

This guidebook is essentially a compilation of eight years of excuses to hit the water. I almost had it completed when the Floods of 1993 came. After that, I had a new round of excuses to revisit the regions of rearrangement. I've tried to update the changes, but just like the Verde itself, this guidebook is really just a work in progress. Readers are encouraged to critique it and contact me if they desire.

Thanks for taking the time to read this effort!!

PEACE UPON THE VERDE,

B.W.



~ Bob Williams in Punk Rock, Mile 96 ~
Photo by Steve Franks

OVERVIEW OF THE VERDE RIVER

Length: + - 198 miles.

Elevations: From 4,360 feet to 1,313 feet above sea level.

Gradient: Average of 15 feet per mile.

Difficulty: From class zero to unrunnable, depending upon the section and quantity of flow. Generally speaking, the Verde is a mild Class I/II river. The rapid slash marks (//) in this guide are not all accompanied by ratings. During normal flows, you can assume that they are Class I or less riffles.

Technical Headwaters: Mt. Floyd near Seligman, Arizona.

Perennial Headwaters: Del Rio Springs and Granite Creek confluence (about 25 miles north of Prescott, Arizona.)

Mouth: Salt and Verde confluence about 35 miles northeast of Phoenix.

Average CFS (Cubic Feet per Second):

Upper runs - 50 cfs.

Middle runs - 200 cfs.

Lower runs - dam controlled.

Peak Record Flow: 127,000 cfs into Horseshoe Reservoir in 1993.

Drainage Area: 6,646 square miles.

Average Acre Feet of Water in the Drainage Annually: 464,253.

Boatable Season(s): A very temperamental, mercurial and unpredictable river above the dams. Low water boating enthusiasts usually have no trouble planning a trip on some section at any time of the year. Please see the river logs. During wet Spring seasons, the run from Beasley Flats (M. 89) to Childs (M. 106) is a Class III (IV) joyride.

Flow Information: The SRP (Salt River Project) Flowline has a daily update on the cfs for river runs below Camp Verde. Their number is (602) 236-

5929.

Number of Perennial Tributaries: 8.

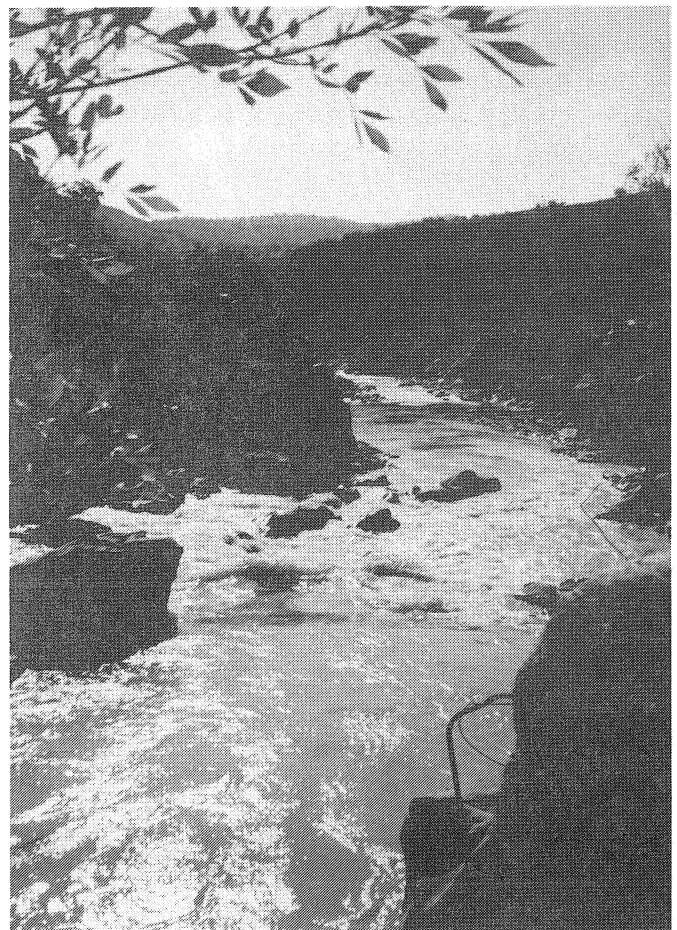
Number of Wilderness Areas in the Drainage: 15.

Number of Wildlife Habitat Protection Areas: 4.

RAPS (River Access Points): Generally, the Verde is an easily accessible river. See the ten RAP sections.

Permits: The formal pay-by-the-day system of other Arizona rivers (e.g., The Grand, Salt and San Juan) is not currently in effect on the Verde. The NFS does occasionally conduct safety and equipment checks at common RAPS for the true whitewater runs below Beasley Flats. For future updates, you should check with the NFS in Camp Verde.

Commercial Boating Opportunities: There are



~ Post falls - Mile 91.6 ~

some. Check with the Chambers of Commerce or outdoor supply stores in the Verde Valley, Flagstaff and Phoenix.

Land Ownership Along the Verde: State, National, Tribal and private entities have stakes on the Verde's shores. Check each chapter for specifics.

Camping: Boaters will easily be able to plan camp spots in every reach except for the Verde Valley (M. 50 to 89) due to prevailing private lands.

Solitude and Scenery: As with all other Arizona rivers, the Verde can claim the extremes of variety. Depending upon the region, it ranges from breathtaking and remote to demoralizing and trashed.

Tourist Attractions Near the Verde River:

- Montezuma's Castle National Monument (just north of Camp Verde)
- Tuzigoot National Monument (between Cottonwood and Clarkdale)
- The Town of Jerome (a couple of miles southwest of Clarkdale)
- Verde River Canyon Train (Clarkdale)
- Sedona/Oak Creek Canyon (about 25 miles north of the Verde Valley)
- Fort Verde State Park (in Camp Verde)
- Old Town Clarkdale and Cottonwood
- Peck's Lake (off the Sycamore Wilderness Road)
- Dead Horse Ranch State Park (in Cottonwood)
- Fort McDowell Gaming Center (near Fountain Hills)
- Horseshoe and Bartlett Lakes
- Tubing (on the Salt and Verde above the confluence)

Guides and References:

Verde River Recreation Guide by Jim Slingluff.

The Whitewater Sourcebook by Richard Penny

Western Whitewater by Cassady, Cross and Calhoun

Rivers of the Southwest by Anderson and Hopkinson

National Forest Service River Runners' Guide.

Arizona Rivers and Streams by Arizona State Parks.

Arizona Rivers - The Lifeblood of the Desert by The Arizona Rivers Coalition.

Boating Tips: This is not a how-to book for boaters. Beginners should check with their local outdoor sports stores for instruction books and videos and get instruction from an experienced boater before ever dipping a blade in the Verde's flow.

Strainers: The Verde is notorious for strainers. Strainers are downed or overhung trees or brush that can and will do just what the name implies – strain water and keep boaters. Typically they are found on the outside of turns where the current has scoured the soil base away, and where flooding has carved newer channels.

Flooding and Channel Changes: Floods such as those in early 1993 continually change the Verde's channels. Throughout this project, I've tried to keep up with documenting major changes.

Special Designations: The American Rivers Organization lists the Verde as one of the top 25 most endangered rivers in the United States.

The Verde from Beasley Flats (M. 89) to just below Childs (M. 107) is Federally protected and designated as "Scenic," and the miles between 107 and Red Creek (M. 129.3) are designated "Wild."

~ RIVER MILEAGE AND THE TOPO MAPS ~



~ Mile 0.0 - Sullivan Lake Dam ~

I chose to begin the river mile markers on the topo maps with Mile 0.0 at Sullivan Lake Dam. Although the headwaters are far to the north and west, maps indicate, and most people agree, that the Verde as a river originates here.

I chose to end the river mile markers not with the confluence of the Salt River, but where both the Salt and Verde waters meet their demise at Granite Reef Diversion Dam, Mile 198.8. Of course, it is a technical flaw, but I simply could not resist succumbing to the ironic twist of having this beautiful and burdened river beginning and ending with dams!

From Sullivan on down to Granite Reef, I estimated the Verde's mileage based on the ancestral pre-dam channels shown on the topos.

My calculations are significantly less than scientific. I never wear a timepiece, and I own only the basics of mapping tools. For these reasons and more, be it known that the sole purpose of the river mile markers is for reference to the text of this guide only.

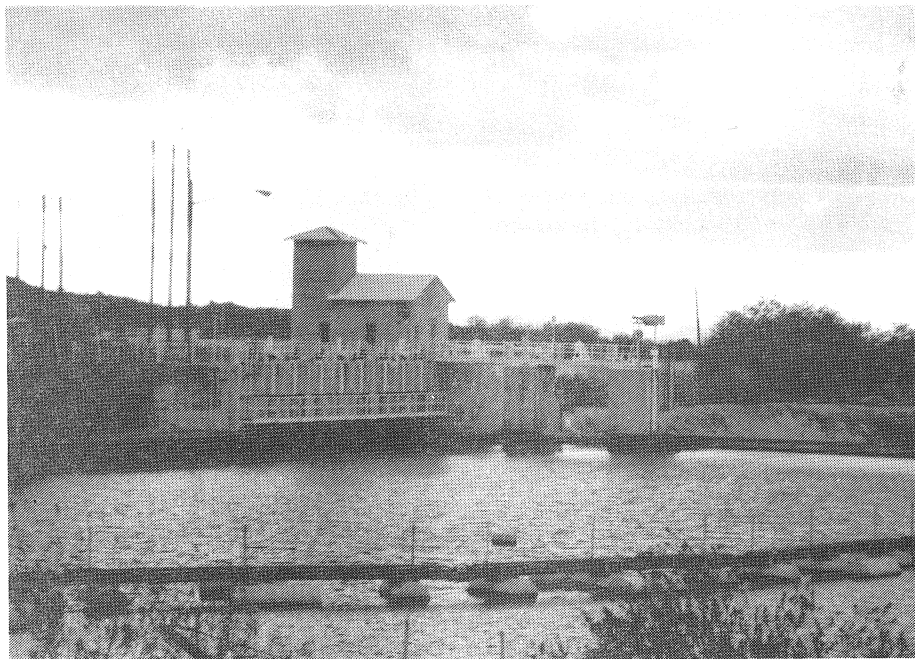
Where possible, I cross-referenced my mileage estimations with help from other paddlers, local landowners and Forest Service personnel. Of particular assistance were these excellent books and guides: *The Verde River Recreation Guide* by Jim Slingluff; *Arizona Rivers and Streams Guide* by Arizona State Parks; and *The Verde River Guide* by the U.S. Forest Service.

On the topic of Verde River miles, you'll seldom find agreement. It is a wildly fluctuating and ever-changing jewel of nature's handiwork. During a good cruise from Beasley to Childs, it may seem like ten. During a labored one, thirty! During a "normal" run, twenty; or is it eighteen? or seventeen? or seventeen and one-half? Who cares! Enjoy the space

between the miles.

~ THE TOPOS ~

I love topos, and I particularly love the 7.5 minute series topographics. Those pieces of artwork so precisely contour a landscape that, when conditions don't allow, you can kick back in your lazy boy and take an imaginary journey. They can be remarkable treasures



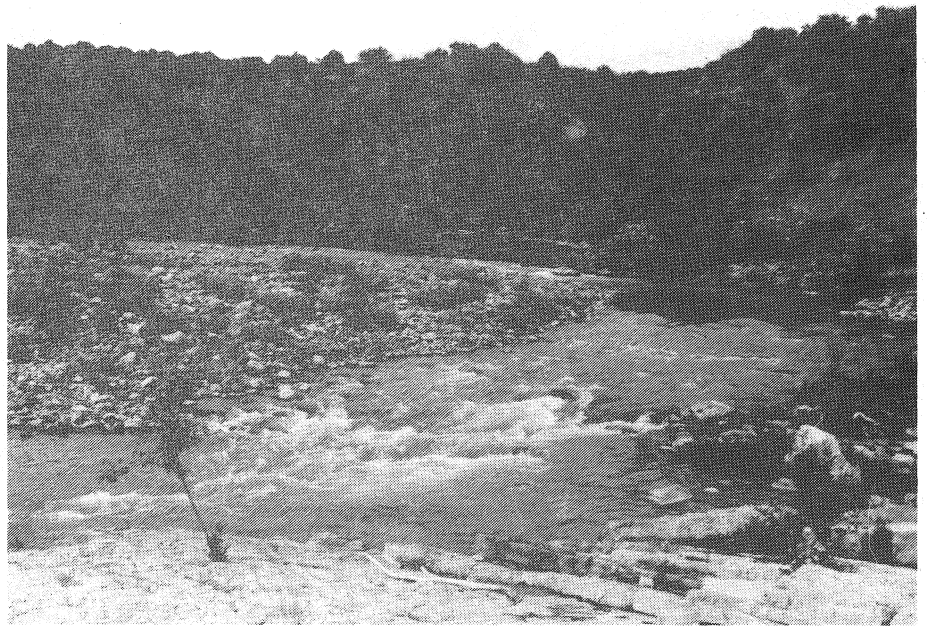
~ Mile 198.8 - Granite Reef Dam ~

as well as invaluable tools.

I knew from the beginning of this project that I wanted the topos to have a prominent place in the river log sections.

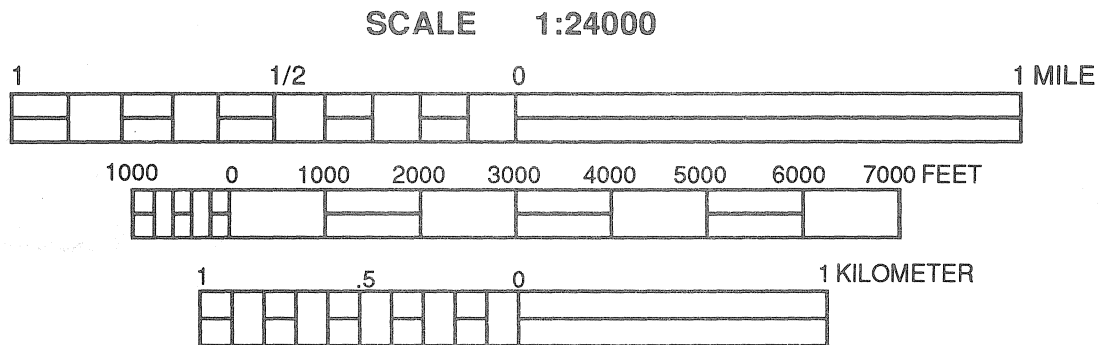
I cut and spliced thirty topos together and placed them intermittently through the river logs. The notations are in my own hand to lessen typesetting and computer costs.

All thirty-four map pages are reproduced in exact scale and positioned with north to the top of the page. This took up a lot of space, but I hope you'll agree that it eases readability and orientation upon the river.



Pre-1994 - Mile 99.1 - White Flash Rapid - The Verde's halfway point.

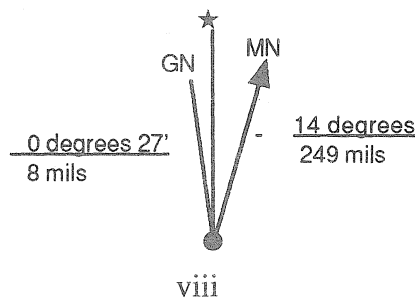
Orientation features were cropped from each map page, so for your reference, critical legend parts common to all 7.5 topos are copied below.



CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET
Dotted lines represent 20-foot contours
Datum is mean sea level

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface		Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	
Secondary highway, hard surface		Unimproved road	

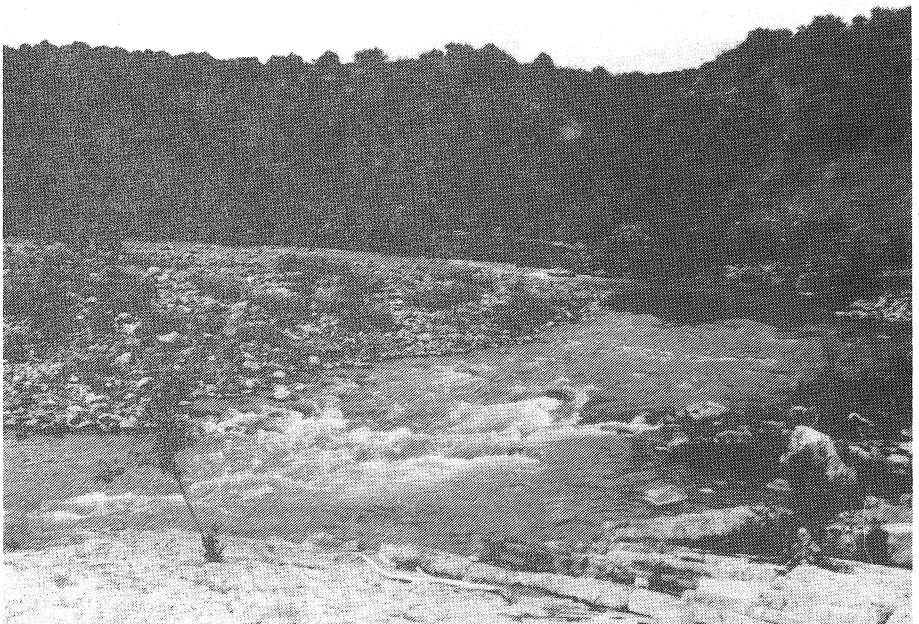


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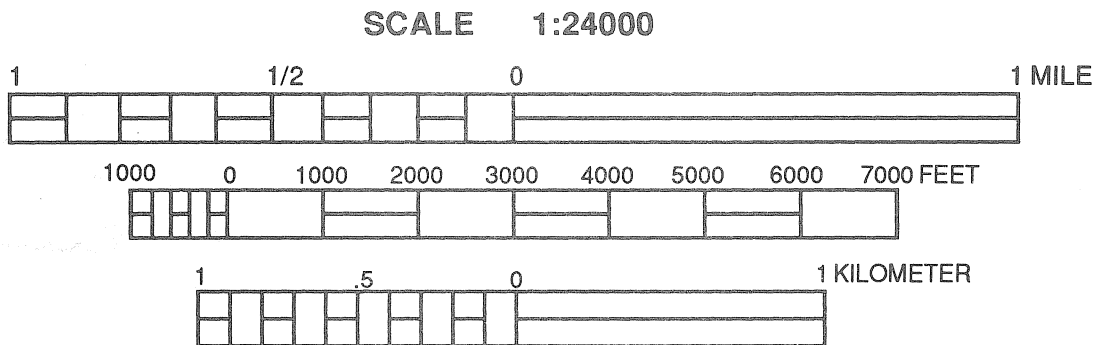
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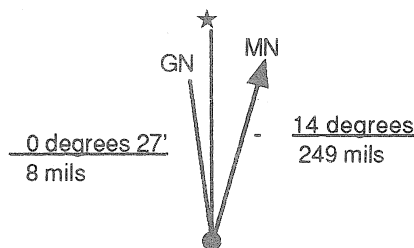
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CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET
Dotted lines represent 20-foot contours
Datum is mean sea level

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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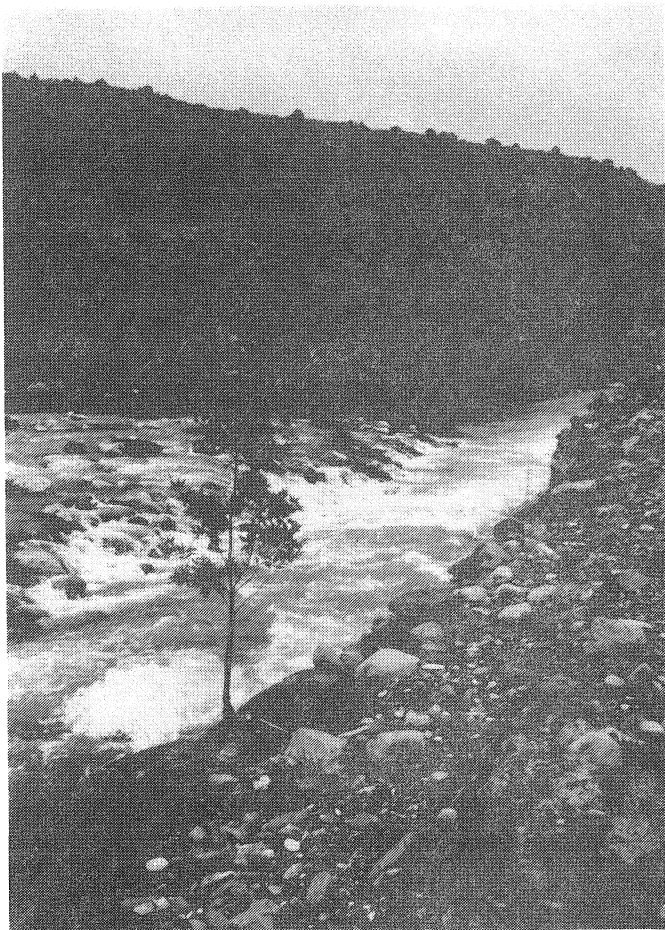


AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

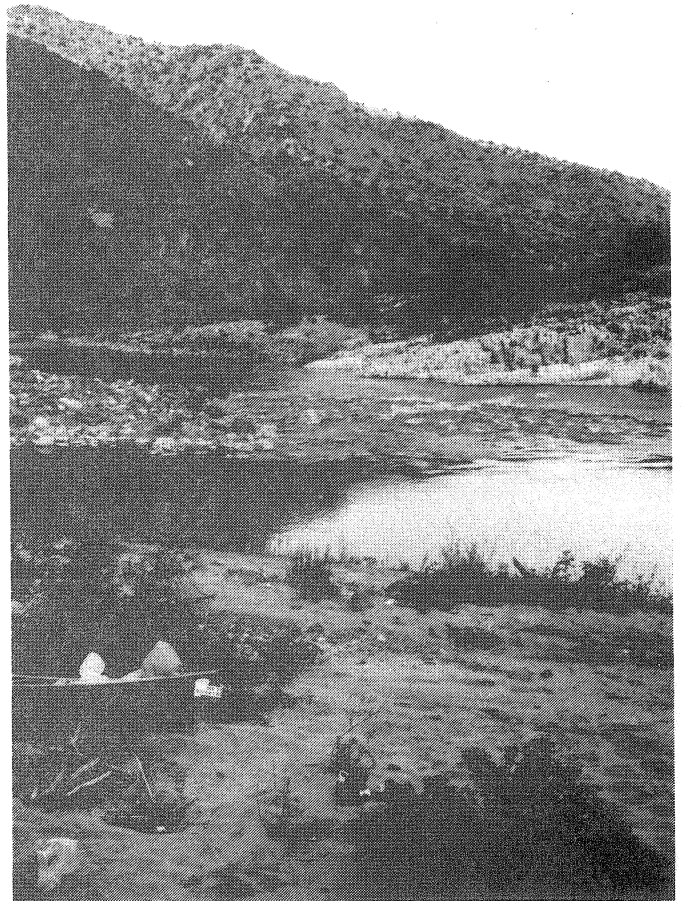
Class I - Moving water with riffles and small waves. Obstructions are easily missed with basic strokes. Risk to swimmers is slight and self-rescue is easy.

Class II - Straight-forward rapids with wide, clear channels. Scouting is advised for novices and newcomers to the stretch. Maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium-sized waves are missed easily by trained paddlers. Risks to swimmers are heightened and group assistance is occasionally necessary.

Class III - Rapids with bigger and irregular waves. The ability to do complex maneuvers and maintain good boat control is essential. Strong currents and eddies and obstructions such as boulders, undercut rocks and strainers pose threats to all but advanced boaters. Scouting is strongly advised. Group rescue is usually needed to avoid long swims, and plans



~ Class II Off-the-Wall - Mile 90.5 (+ - 300 cfs) ~



~ Mile 101.7 - Typical Verde Class I ~

should be well laid out ahead of time. Open canoes run a high risk of swamping in Class III and higher drops.

Class IV - Intense and powerful rapids requiring precise boat handling in turbulent water. Constricted passages with unavoidable drops and holes. Scouting is mandatory and all floaters should be closely monitored by rescuers in boats and upon the shore. Risk of injury to swimmers is severe.

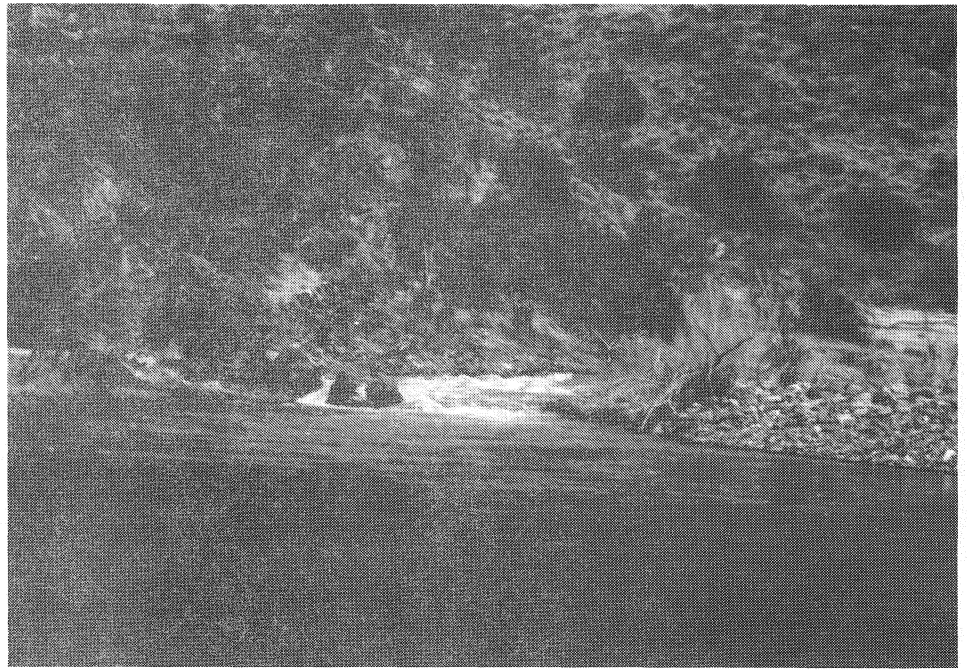
Class V - Violent rapids that pose extreme danger to even expert paddlers. Scouting and rescue may be difficult to conduct.

Class VI - Rapids that exemplify the outer extremes of difficulty, unpredictability and danger. Unrunnable by all except ultra skilled and daredevil teams of hair-

boaters.

"Class Action" Disclaimer:

The preceding classification system is very generalized and purposefully left open to individual interpretation. Rapid and river section classes can vary up or down depending upon quantity of flow, air and water temperatures, civilized or remote settings, individual and group skills and preparations, size of the boating party, boat choice and whether you "cheat" or run the teeth of the drop.

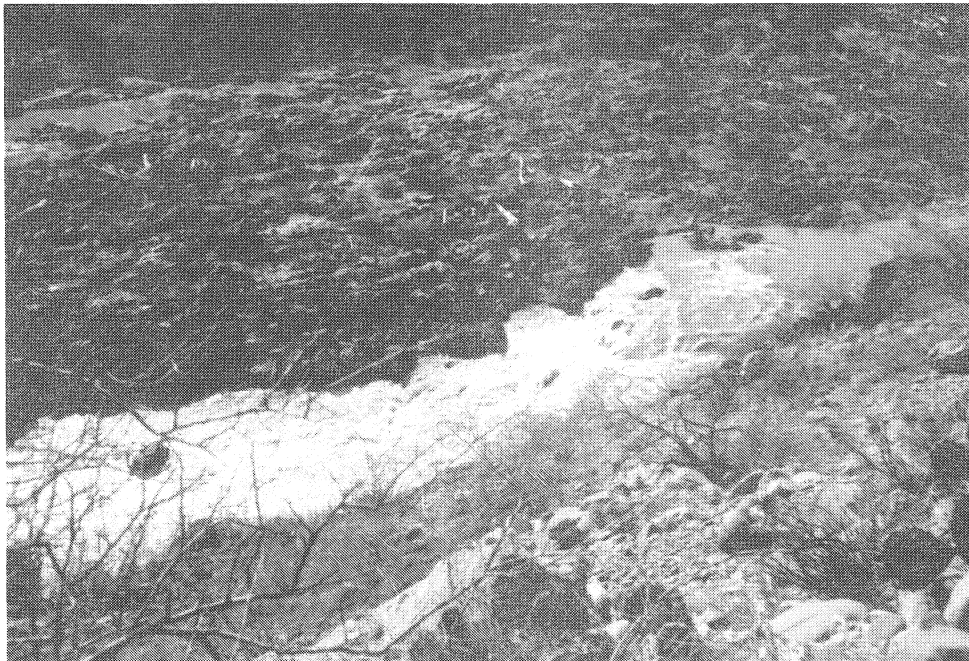


~ Class III Punk Rock Rapid - Mile 96.0 (+ - 300 cfs) ~

I note my interpretations of classification in the introduction of each chapter mainly to help readers choose stretches that are likely to fit their skills and trip purposes. Be it clear and understood that this interpreter is held harmless if a Verde run either exceeds or disappoints the reader's interpretations and observations when you are upon the river.

ELEVATION DROP

I figured the elevation drop mile by mile by consult-



~ Class IV+ Verde Falls at High Water - Mile 91.3 (+ - 2,000 cfs) ~

ing the topos. It was rough plotting at best, so you'll notice all elevations are rounded to the nearest ten.

Average drop in conjunction with rapid classification can help boaters decide what stretches to run and where greater current speed and rapids are likely to occur.

The Verde's overall elevation drop from Sullivan to the Confluence is about 15 feet per mile. However, the main boating stretch from Camp Verde to Horseshoe is more like 20 plus.

While elevation drop is important, it can also be deceiving in and of itself. A comparison:

The Salt through Salt River Canyon - 20 feet per mile.

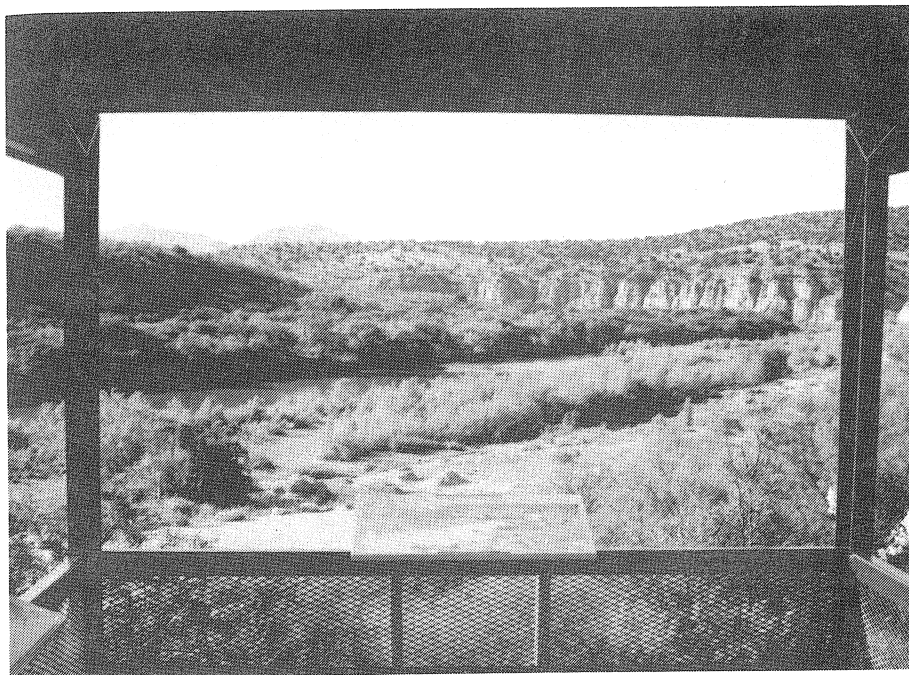
The Upper Gila - 25 feet per mile.

The San Juan - 8 feet per mile.

The Grand - 8 feet per mile.

So, the average elevation drop is good to know, but what's more important are the drops within the drop!

RIVER ACCESS POINTS (RAPS)



~ Mile 89 - Beasley Flat - The common put-in RAP for runs to Childs, Sheep Bridge or the Dam.

Every chapter of this guide has a prominent portion devoted to river access points. A thorough study of all RAPS and maps for a stretch you plan to float is of critical importance. You'll need this knowledge for the obvious reason of planning your put-in and take-out, but also for safety reasons should you encounter troubles during your trip.

A working definition of a RAP (for river-runners) is any place that you can legally put-in or take-out without an unreasonably long haul of your gear to or from your vehicle.

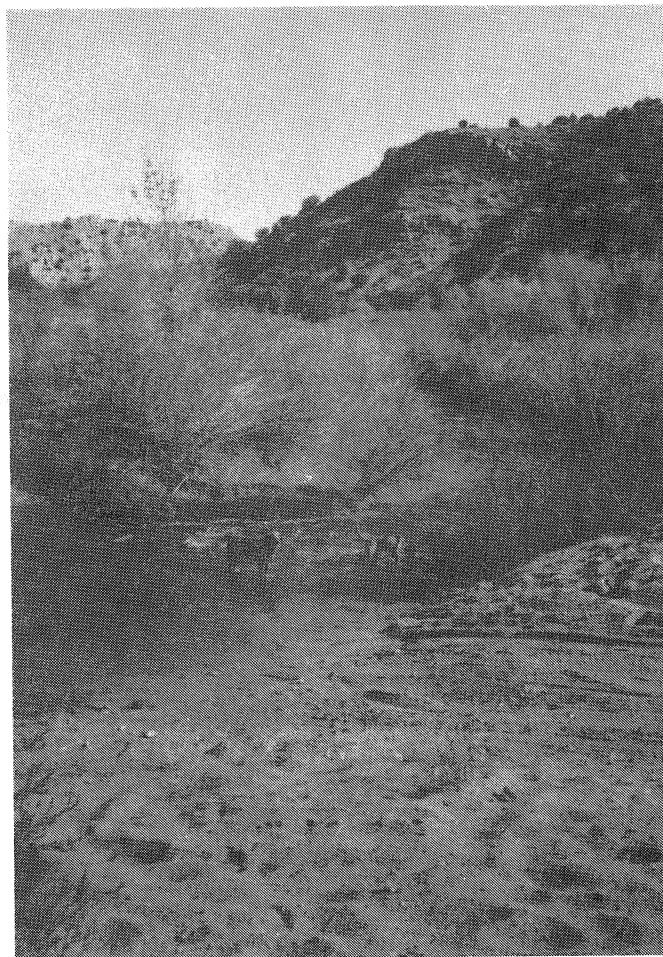
By and large, the Verde is an easily accessible river. It is bridged, forded or otherwise (two dams) crossed by pavement alone in nine places! Numerous other roads spur to its shores that could be negotiated by overloaded Cadillacs.

Then again, there are some long and prime reaches where RAPS are limited and "iffy." It all depends upon where you wish to go.

Following now is a list of considerations for floaters regarding river access – most of which will be discussed throughout this guide as they pertain to specific runs:

Private property; Indian Reservation property; Habitat Closure areas; restricted vehicle access, restricted human presence; trip length; shuttle time; road conditions and vehicle type; weather conditions; river flow levels; dam releases; remoteness; purposes of your trip; camping spot plans; extent of RAP human impact; availability of services; the size of your party and quantity of gear; contingency plans between initial, intermediate and exit RAPS; and where to find more information.

Know your RAPS well, and be a RAP ambassador for us all as you come and go, or float on by.



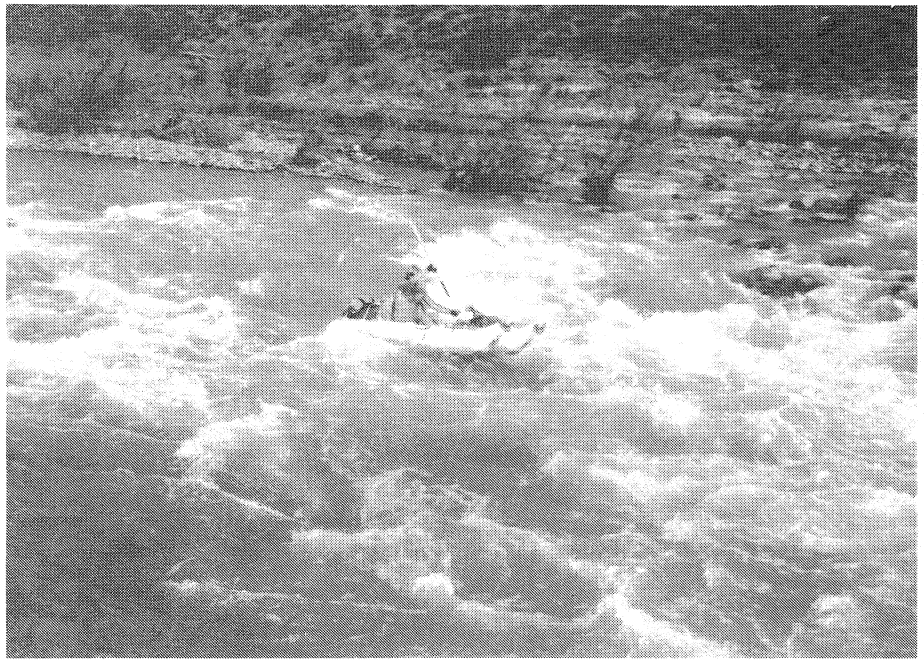
~ Mile 7.1 - The Verde's uppermost public RAP NE of Chino Valley ~

CUBIC FEET PER SECOND (CFS)

Cubic feet per second is defined as the amount of cubic feet of water passing a certain point on the river in one second's time. Almost all larger rivers report their flows with cfs instead of the less accurate "height" or "feet-above-the-river's-bed" method.

The Verde's cfs is recorded by the Salt River Project (SRP) at several locations along its course. When you call the SRP Flowline (602-236-5929) you will hear the readings for four of the gauges. Calling the Flowline or talking directly with an SRP hydrologist just prior to your trip is highly recommended. Cfs can drastically alter your trip preparations!

Heavy local storms, rain on top of snows in the upper tribs, unexpected releases or choke-offs from the dams and the fact that SRP reports flows only once a day can all make judging the cfs an inexact science while you are on the River. Many times I've been sorely disappointed to find the flow way down from what was reported the previous day. Alas, one must



~ Brad Newman in Mile 90.6 drop (at + - 400 cfs) ~

know and remember that unpredictability is one of the Verde's and paddlesports' more endearing qualities.

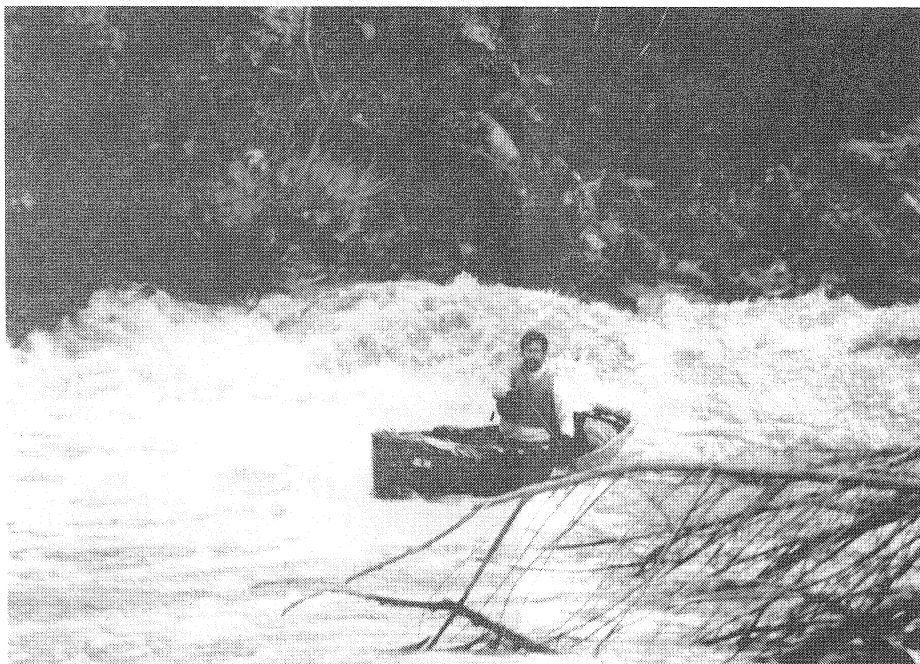
Two of the SRP recordings are for the releases from Horseshoe and Bartlett Dams. Knowing these flows is mandatory for those boaters wishing to float the Verde's last forty-eight miles. Also, boaters running down the wilderness stretch from Childs to Horseshoe Lake should call the Flowline to be certain that the

lake has enough water to paddle across. Please see Chapter 8.

Throughout the chapters of this guide, I'll often use the terms low, medium or high flows; or rocky, decent or heavy; or other subjective descriptions. Judging the cfs is just too much of a guessing game to get overly precise about. In general, when I refer to the flows of the common runs between Camp Verde and Horseshoe in such terms, it means:

Camp Verde Reading

- Low Water - 250 cfs or lower
- Medium Water - 250 to 500 cfs
- High Water - 500 to 1,000 cfs
- Big Water - 1,000+ cfs



~ Bob Medlyn just below Punk Rock, Mile 96.0 (+ - 2,000) ~

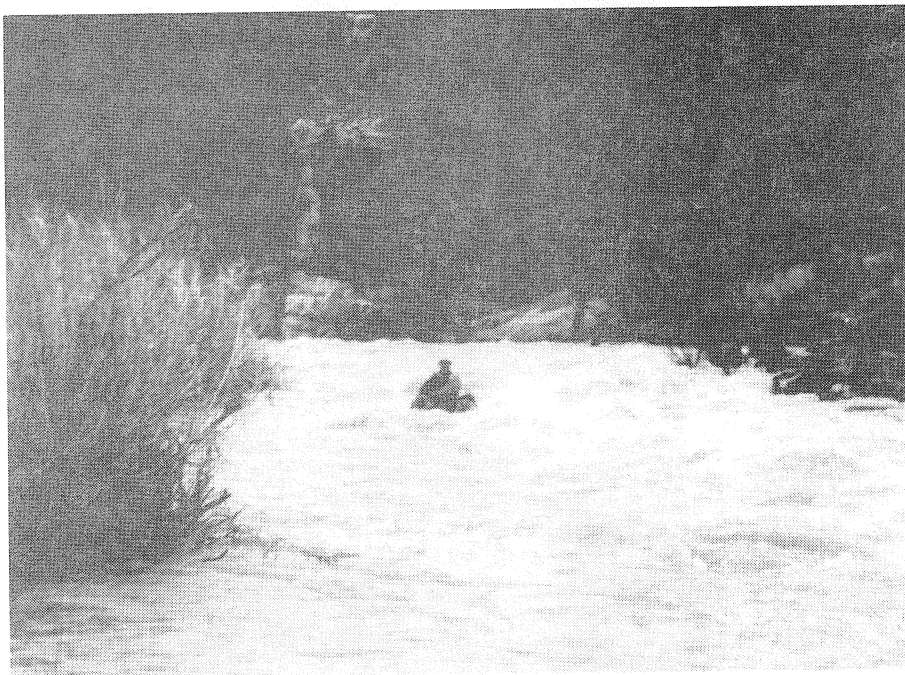
Below are some SRP Flowline readings arbitrarily chosen over a four-year period to highlight the Verde's ups and downs:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CAMP VERDE</u>	<u>INTO HORSESHOE</u>
03/06/91	8,339	7,980
03/19/91	1,343	597
03/20/91	913	1,570
04/04/91	4,679	5,168
04/15/91	152	399
06/01/91	49	138
07/05/91	24	96
01/07/92	2,042	5,478
02/14/92	13,136	8,692
02/20/92	560	1,324
05/01/92	47	196
08/24/92	9,330	10,387
09/29/92	48	185
12/29/92	11,361	8,323
12/31/92	2,194	5,611
01/08/93	26,000	126,070
01/17/93	30,395	47,000
01/27/93	420	2,790
02/20/93	51,668	72,000
03/26/93	865	2,262
06/14/93	68	215
11/11/93	123	268

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CAMP VERDE</u>	<u>INTO HORSESHOE</u>
02/07/94	207	302
06/09/94	48	126
02/15/95	65,325	93,300
02/16/95	13,297	24,988
02/17/95	4,151	9,514
02/21/95	643	2,202
03/06/95	80,000	9,000
030/9/95	3,267	8,122
03/12/95	2,324	4,459
03/14/95	1,441	4,781
04/10/95	158	190
050/2/95	318	327
06/06/95	51	137



~ Ed O'Malley and Jeff Dykeman in Two Rock Drop, Mile 93.5 +- 250 cfs ~



~ Bob Williams in Good Ride, Mile 101.1 at 1,500 cfs ~

Photo by Bob Medlyn

THE PHOTOS

Except where credited otherwise, all of the photos were taken by the author. By and large, the photos may seem monotonously common and certainly taken by a point-and-shoot sort of amateur. True, true. Artistic impression was not an objective.

Instead, I sincerely hope that they will serve the reader well with orientation while upon the Verde. Furthermore, perhaps the photos will capture the incredible changes that the Verde undergoes from season to season and, sometimes, in a mere flinch of time.

HISTORY OF RUNNING (AND WALKING) THE VERDE

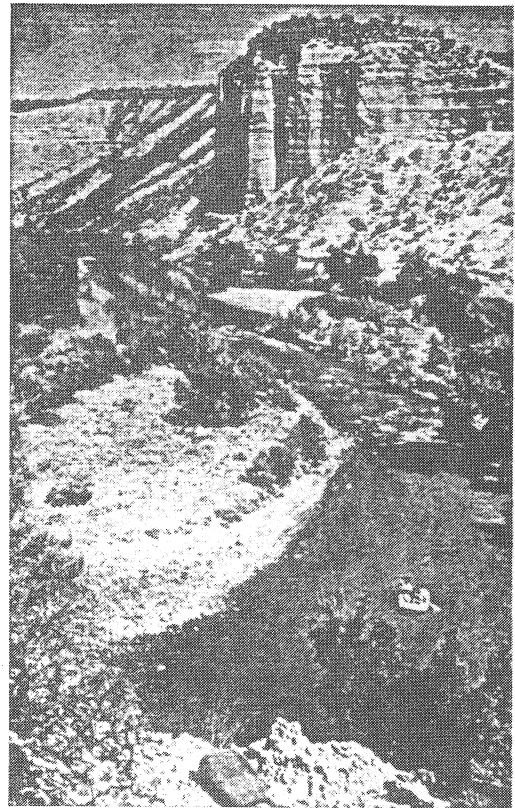
The first documentation I could find of modern day river running on the Verde was from 1952. Two articles (*Arizona - Wildlife Sportsman*, June, 1952; and *Westways*, August, 1954), written by Rex Stanley, tell the story of what is believed to be the first descent of the wilderness stretch from Camp Verde to Horseshoe. A.C. Reed, Carl Eldridge, Al Owlsie and Herman Womack made the trip in eight days in two pre-war paddle rafts. The articles contain some historic photographs and fascinating accounts of some of their adventures (albeit with some excusable mistakes in distances, elevations and probable exaggerations). Mr. Stanley writes:

"The Verde River charges and sulks 100 miles down a deepening gorge to a desert lake, 4,000 feet below, but for four Arizona explorers - not professionals, but the 'try and see what happens' kind - the untried Verde was tailor-made for a hair-raising float trip."

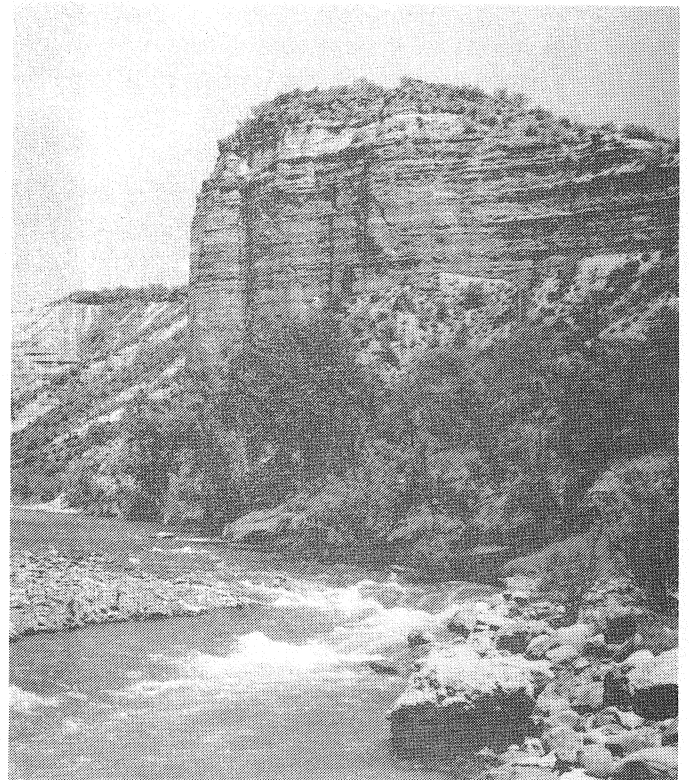
With the river-running boom beginning everywhere, primarily due to the glut of surplus World War II rafts, there's no telling how many more "try-and-see-what-happens" types were lured down the river after this inaugural crew.

Another first came in 1989 when Jim Slingluff made the first documented continuous run of the Verde from Morgan Ranch to the Salt River. Mr. Slingluff canoed and explored for about thirty days. That trip and his multitude of other Verde adventures led him to write the *Verde River Recreation Guide*. It is a comprehensive and remarkable book that should be in every Verde enthusiast's collection (and dry bag or ammo can!).

I'm not sure that this last little morsel of history was actually a first, but it invites inclusion anyway. In April of 1979, James Cowlin walked the entire length of the Verde in a month's time. His log makes for, shall I say, very entertaining (and informative) reading. It can be found in the February 10, 1980, issue of *The New Times*.



Mile 137 - "Honey Chute" - 1952



Mile 137 - "Honey Chute" - 1992

VERDE RIVER INFORMATION AGENCIES

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

2222 West Greenway
Phoenix, Arizona 85023
(602) 942-3000

ARIZONA RIPARIAN COUNCIL

c/o Center for Environmental Studies
Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona 85287-1201

ARIZONA RIVERS COALITION

c/o American Rivers
3601 North 7th Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85013
(602) 264-1823

ARIZONA STATE PARKS

800 West Washington, Suite 415
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 542-1993

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

3707 North 7th Street #200
P.O. Box 16563
Phoenix, Arizona 85011
(602) 650-0504

CAMP VERDE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

P.O. Box 1665
Camp Verde, Arizona 86322
(520) 567-9294

CAMP VERDE YAVAPAI-APACHE TRIBE

Box 1188
Camp Verde, Arizona 86322
(520) 567-3109

CENTRAL ARIZONA PADDLERS CLUB

Box 11090, Suite 374
Phoenix, Arizona 85061-1090
(602) 271-4012

COCONINO NATIONAL FOREST

2323 Greenlaw Lane
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001
(520) 556-7400

FORT McDOWELL APACHE TRIBE

Box 17779
Fountain Hills, Arizona
(602) 990-0995

PRESCOTT NATIONAL FOREST

344 South Cortez Street
Prescott, Arizona 86301
(520) 445-1762

SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA TRIBE

Route 1, Box 216
Scottsdale, Arizona 85256
(602) 941-7277

SALT RIVER PROJECT FLOWLINE

(602) 236-5929

THE VERDE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

c/o The Verde Natural Resource Conservation Dist.
P.O. Box 280
Camp Verde, Arizona 86322
(520) 567-6645

TONTO NATIONAL FOREST

2324 East McDowell Road
Phoenix, Arizona 85010
(602) 225-5200

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE

3616 West Thomas #6
Phoenix, Arizona 85019
(602) 379-4720

U.S. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

202 East Earll Drive #115
Phoenix, Arizona 85012
(602) 640-5250

SHUTTLING

The shuttle times mentioned in each chapter are estimated round trip times from the put-in RAP, to the take-out (to leave a vehicle) and back to the put-in. Shuttle schemes are as diverse as boaters' personalities, but one thing about them is certain – they are the most critical aspect of your trip planning. Every member of the group should be involved in planning the shuttle and be very aware of the details and contingencies. Below are some fundamental considerations that may or may not apply to your trip, depending upon the size of your party, the length of your trip, your creativity and independence, availability of shuttle services, and how often you've previously imposed on spouses or friends!

- Who has the keys and are there multiple sets with the vehicle(s) and upon the boat(s)?
- What are the approximate one-way or round-trip driving times?
- Who has the watch?
- How long do you expect to be on the river?
- What's the cfs?
- What are the current road conditions?
- Is your take-out vehicle suitable for the conditions?
- Is your take-out vehicle large enough to accommodate all of the gear and people?
- Did all of the lashing ropes and straps get into the shuttle vehicle?
- Don't let your shuttle vehicle leave the put-in until you're sure you've got your boats packed with only what you'll need while on the river.
- Does the take-out vehicle have enough gas, extra water, dry clothing and some beverages and snacks?
- Are there intermediate RAPS? Everyone should be aware of them just in case of severe weather or emergencies.
- Some exit RAPS are easy to miss while on the river, so be watchful and regularly consult your maps.



~ Shuttling - The possibilities are endless! ~

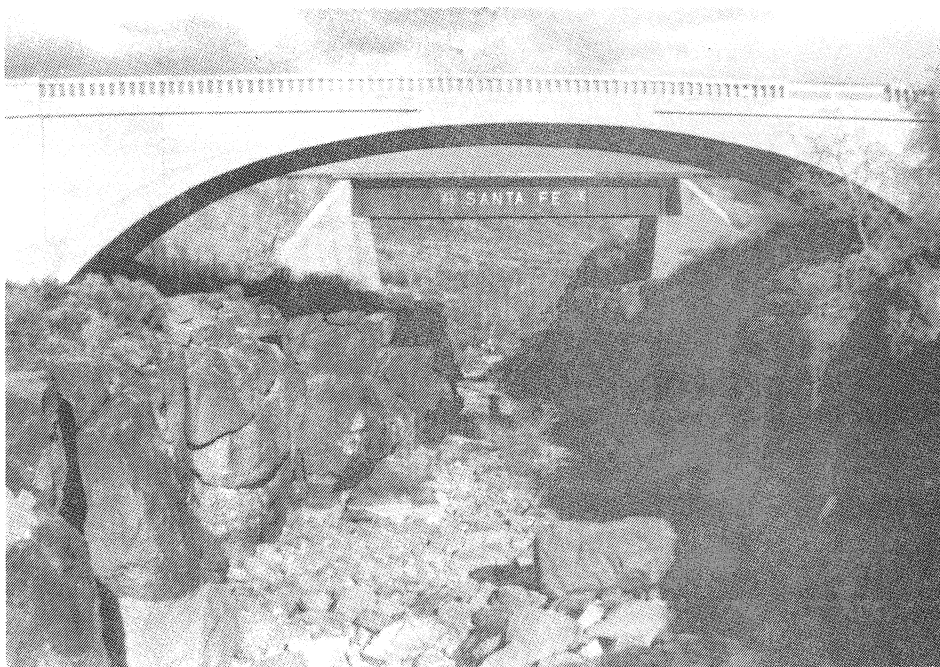
- It is always wise to try to arrive on time or early at the take-out to avoid concern and give yourself time to de-rig and change.
- If you engage a shuttle service, friend or spouse, is everyone clear on times? What to do if either party is running late? Where the keys will be stashed if the vehicle is left unattended? And does everyone possess maps of the river segment and roads?

Ah, shuttle schemes – half art and half science!

~Notes~

SULLIVAN LAKE DAM (M.0) TO GRANITE CREEK (M.1.8)

- Total River Miles - 1.8
- Elevation Drop - 4,360 to 4,240
- Average Drop - 66 feet per mile
- Class - not applicable
- Topo Map - Chino Valley North
- Shuttle Time - not applicable
- Days needed - not applicable



~Origin Canyon - Mile 0~

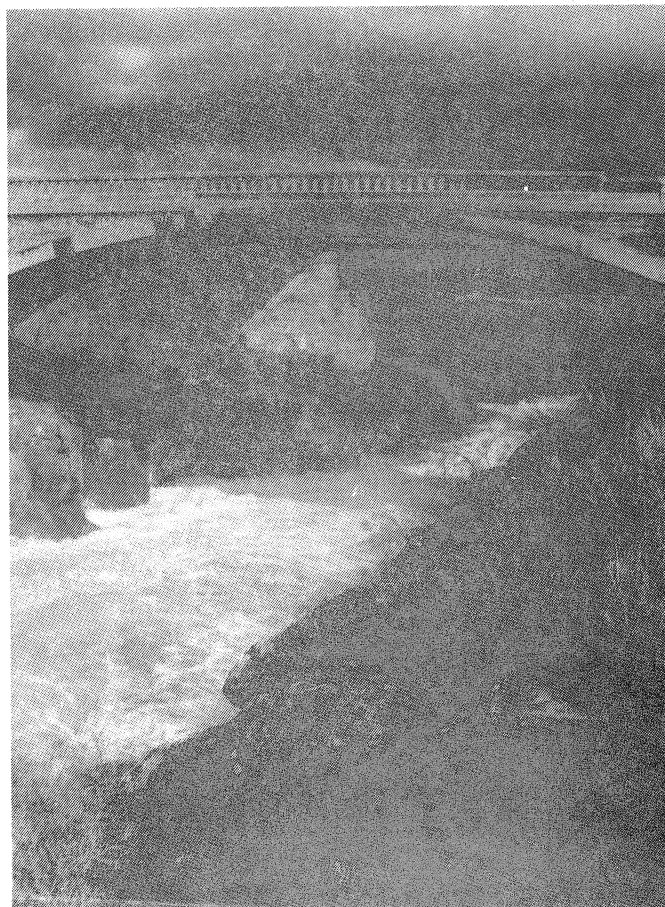
RIVER ACCESS POINTS ~RAPS~

Old Highway 89 (mile 0) - Drive four miles north of Chino Valley on Highway 89 until you see the "Old Highway 89" sign on your right. Take Old 89 for two miles until you reach the bridge and adjacent railway trestle. You are at the Verde River's origin.

Granite Creek (mile 1.8) - Strictly private roads and private access.

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS, HIGHLIGHTS AND CAUTIONS

The Verde River origin is Sullivan Lake, but the technical headwaters lie upon the slopes of 7,400-foot Mount Floyd just northeast of Seligman, some 60 miles north. From there, multitudes of washes gather on a southerly course to their settlement in the Big Chino area. The Big Sandy Wash, as it is called just



~Mile 0 -- The Floods of '93~

west of Seligman, is a major wash that is crossed by thousands of motorists daily. Curiously, the Big Sandy is actually the beginning of the Big Chino! Somewhere between Interstate 40 and the advent of the Juniper Mountains, it changes its name.

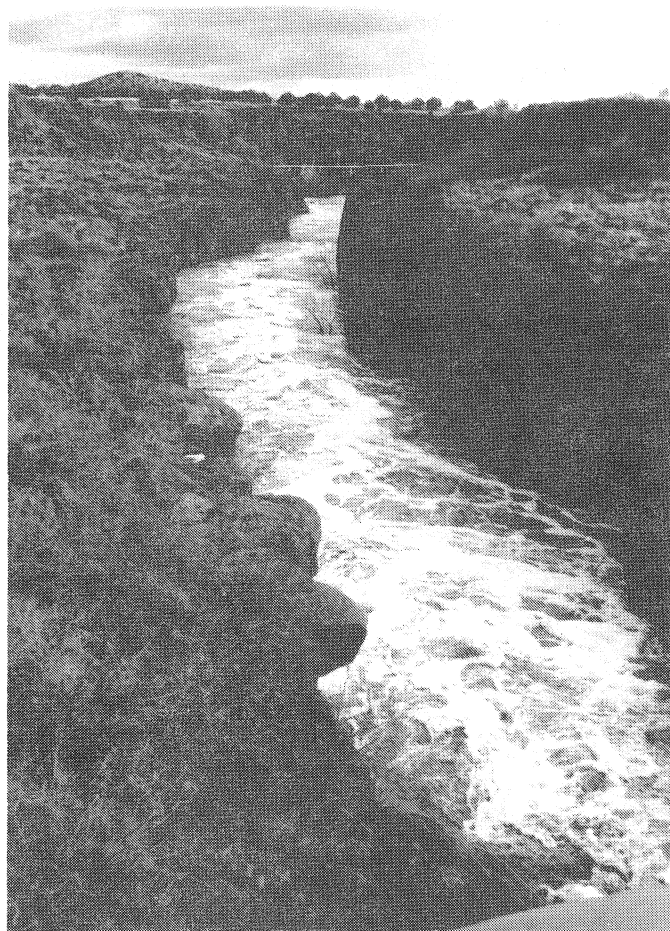
Only during rapid snowmelt or intense rains, such as early 1993, will the waters of the Big Chino reach Sullivan Lake as surface flow. Instead, most of the drainage from the vast headwaters region seeps

State and Federal agencies and interests, and you name it are all in the frays over this subterranean resource. Water battles are not new in the arid Southwest, so this region of such far-reaching importance will likely continue to persevere its share.

Sullivan Lake Dam was built in 1938 by the WPA. The City of Prescott had the idea of making the origins area into a recreation lake and park. However, the WPA funds dried up before the entire project was



~Mile 0.1 - Normal~



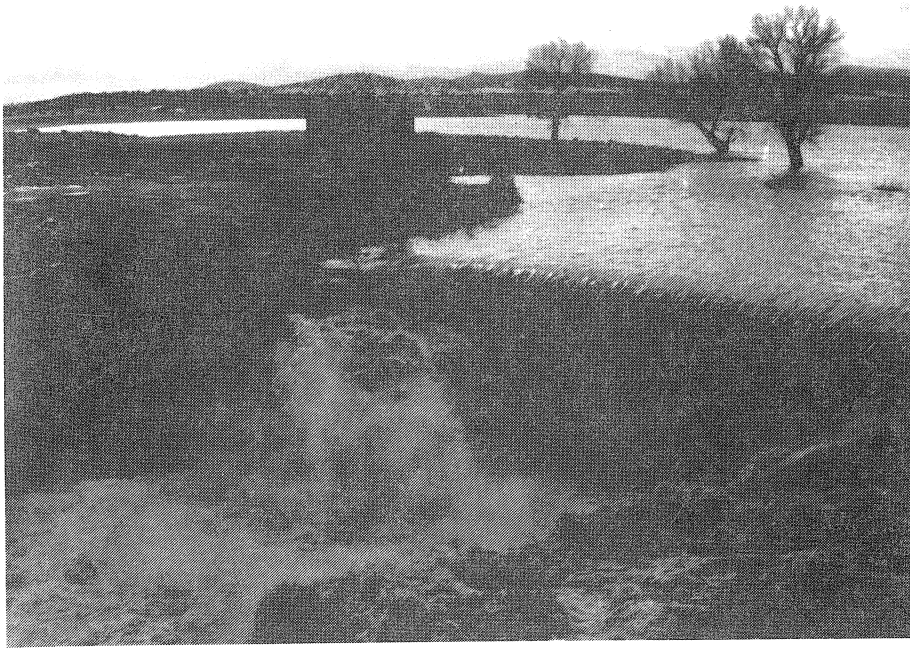
~Mile 0.1 - Extraordinary~

through the porous soil and sandy beds into the Big Chino aquifer.

The Big Chino is one of the major aquifers of the entire Southwest. It is so enormous, reliable, valuable and of such vital importance to the perennial flow of the Verde that it is a battleground as well as a water farm. Chino Valley, Prescott, other small towns, downstream users, developers (a lot is happening in these parts!), preservationists, ranchers, landowners,

completed, so that only man-made historical testaments to effort and natural features remain, awaiting the tests of time.

The largest of the stone buildings was to have been the clubhouse and the smaller ones – duck blinds! Sullivan "Lake" itself, named for the early day ranch owner, Jerry Sullivan, has been rendered practically useless because it is silted to the hilt behind the tough old WPA Dam. Vestiges of the gorge above the dam are barely evident.



~Mile 0.0 - Sullivan Lake Dam - January, 1993~

The Sullivan area is a provocative place to ponder and explore, and it is an especially ideal small-scale region of study for anyone interested in the effects of dams on river and stream morphology.

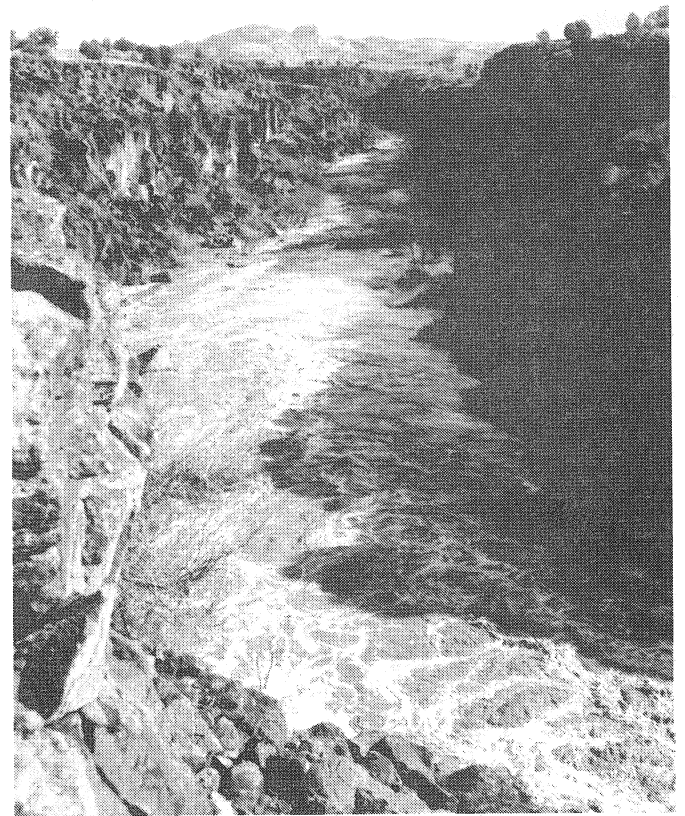
Below Sullivan Lake dam, the Verde immediately begins retaking its shape and characteristics of origin. Small pools can be found even in the driest of times throughout this mile-long slot of jumbled basalt. The perennial trickle won't begin, however, until below the Springs at mile 1.0.

The Springs that mark the beginning of the perennial flow of the Verde at Mile 1.0 are of the same network as the historic Del Rio Springs about three miles due south. Del Rio Springs (meaning "of the river springs") was the site of one of the lesser known chapters of Arizona history.

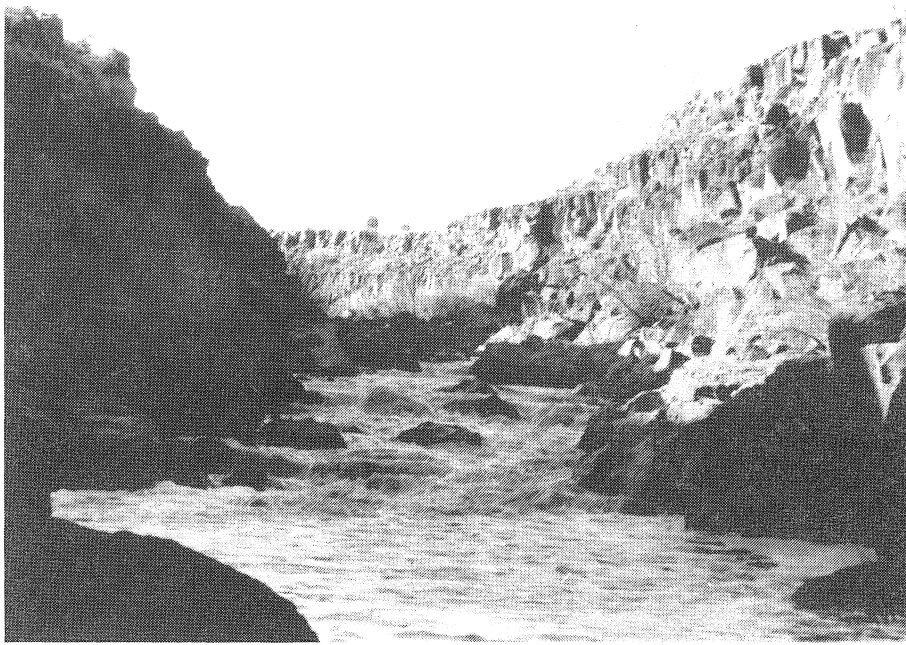
Books commonly state, and many fellow Prescottonians loyally uphold the notion, that in 1864 Prescott became the first territorial capital of Arizona. Well, Prescott was the first "permanent" capital, but an interesting twist of events in the later months of 1863 actually made Del Rio Springs the original (albeit temporary) location of the government of the Territory of Arizona.

On December 20, 1863, Governor Goodwin's advance military scouts thought they had arrived in Prescott because that pinnacle four miles northeast of Del Rio Springs so closely resembled the Thumb Butte described to them by earlier parties. The similarities of the two "Thumb Buttes" are remarkable, and considering the distance the group had traveled, it is not hard to imagine their elation overcoming good judgement at finally reaching journey's end.

In a matter of time, the advance party realized they had undershot Prescott by about twenty miles; but they settled in nevertheless, established the original Fort Whipple and awaited Governor Goodwin's arrival. Our first Governor to serve arrived at Del Rio Springs on January 22, 1864,



~Mile 0.4 - Looking down river towards "the butte"~



~Mile 0.4~

and from there oversaw the origins of Arizona government until moving his entourage south in May, 1864, to the shores of Granite Creek, the shadow of the true Thumb Butte and the permanence of Prescott Quite a twist. And the rest, as they say, is history!

The tale of the origins of territorial governance is but an appetizer on the rich historical menu "Of The River Springs" region. From the beginnings of the settlements by the ancient native peoples to the illustrious days of such missionaries as Father Kino (who some say fathered the name "Chino") to the heyday ranching era to the rise of modern development and accompanying water needs, the abundance of Del Rio and the entire origin's area has sprung forth countless prominent people, profound events and perennial history.

The gorge below Sullivan Lake dam is a unique, intimate and fascinating place. I refer to it as origin gorge, but other names I've heard are Sullivan Canyon, Morgan Ranch Canyon and Inscription Canyon (petroglyphs are here). It is a relatively little-known favorite of local climbers, scramblers, hikers, birders and general explorers. Because of the brush and boulders, a hike to

mile 1.0 and back will take at least two hours.

As of this writing, these activities in the gorge are tolerated by the landowners. What is not tolerated is any unauthorized motorized entry, off-road use, hunting, fishing or any irresponsible presence. The ranchlands surrounding the origins are well posted. You must seek permission for any restricted activity.

I know the frustration of having access limited to natural lands because of private ownership. It is, however, a fact of life. Setting oneself up as an adversary to landowners proves little up here where ranching traditions run far deeper than the Verde itself. I hope that the intrusive behaviors of the relative few don't completely exhaust the goodwill of the ranch owners, or we all may be out of luck.

Until January 11, 1991, the thousands upon thousands of acres surrounding the gorge were owned by Mrs. Learah Cooper Morgan. On that date, Yavapai County lost one of its true and beloved pioneers when Mrs. Morgan died at her ranch at the age of 83.



~Mile 0.4~



~Mile 0.2~

It is now left to the private business of Mrs. Morgan's numerous relatives to determine the future of the origin lands and the expansive Morgan Ranch property.

After mile 1.0 and the Origin Springs, the terrain of the canyon begins to widen around the beautiful Morgan Ranch Pool. This pool extends from Mile 1.3 clear to the low water ford where Granite Creek enters at mile 1.8. If you were so allowed and so inclined, you could paddle up to the far end of this pool and declare yourself upon the very first place that the Verde is floatable all year round! For us boaters and lovers of the Verde, Mile 1.3 is a truly significant and symbolic spot.

Until January, 1993, it was inconceivable to me that the Verde's origin canyon could ever be floated at any time in any way above mile 1.3 – inconceivable . . . period . . . ! Well, that notion dramatically changed when Mother Nature unleashed an historic period of prolonged and relentless storms upon all of Arizona that resulted in what many called the real arrival of the 100-year floods.

I have never witnessed a more incredible sight in all my times on or near the Verde than the origin gorge during the peak of these floods in early 1993. The peaceful and normally parched place that I had visited scores of times had been transformed – by five to six vertical feet of runoff topping the dam – into a roaring, foaming and silt-suspended grinding torrent. The "Sight at Sullivan" rendered me so slack-jawed and wide-eyed that I snapped off two rolls of film in no time at all for fear that waking from my dream would return me home with no earthly records of the scene. Absolutely and indescribably unbelievable!

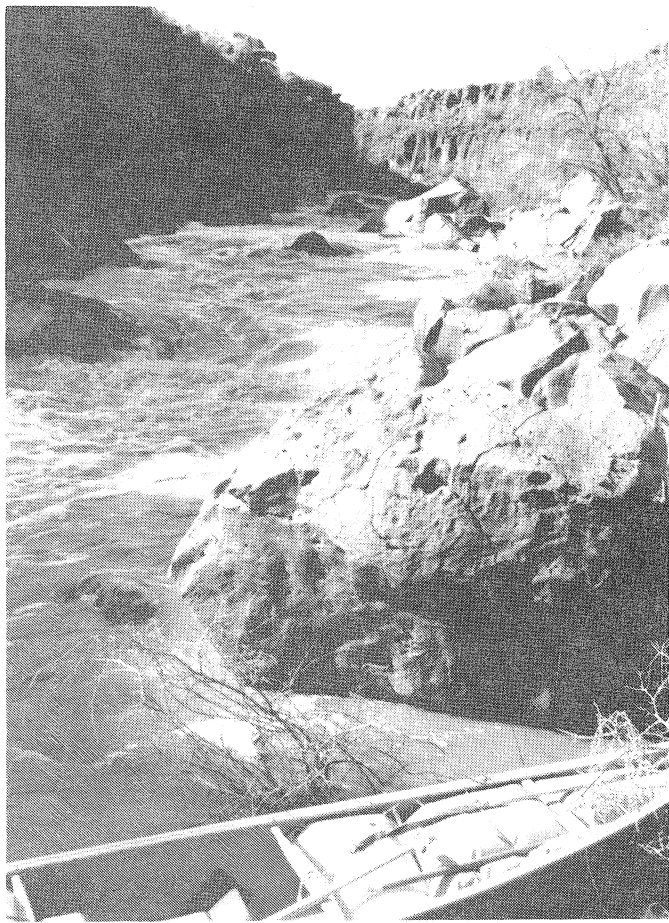
I spent a lot of time at the sight at Sullivan during that memorable week. I'd walk the lip of the gorge down to the overlooks of the Granite Creek confluence (another sight to behold) and all the while wonder, scout and ponder the possibilities of canoeing this rare treat. Would there ever again in this lifetime be this much water flowing through here?

Huge boils; meat grinder holes; angular and sharp boulders unshaven by such waters; squirrely, confused and horrific currents; trees; nearly impossible scouting and portaging footing; difficult rescue and the 100-feet-per-one-mile drop all made this maelstrom very hazardous territory.

It wasn't until the runoff quieted to approximately two feet over the dam that I decided to give the gorge a go. The attempt would prove to be my shortest, most laborious, yet most memorable Verde adventure.

I put in on the South side of the gorge at the pipeline crossing at mile 0.1. Getting my gear down this steep break in the basalt formation was just the first of the several ordeals of this undertaking. Immediately after putting in, I hit the first small drop and settled down and into a comforting level stretch that allowed me some moments to drift and relish the scenery from this surreal perspective. It seemed that both the floater and the water did not know how to behave in these newfound, curious and bewildering surroundings!

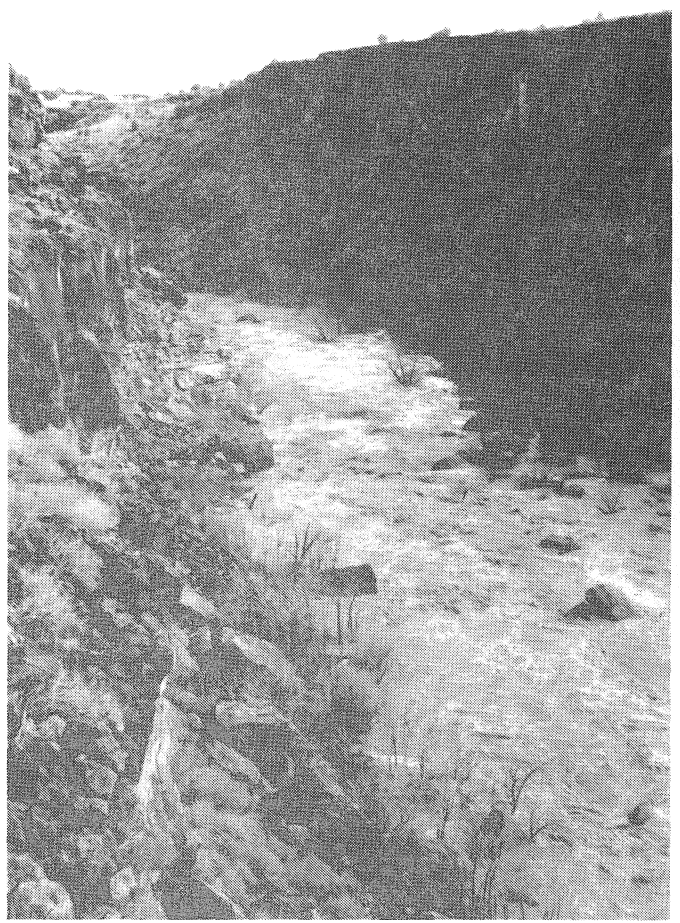
I pulled over above the first lengthy drop, tied up and set about scouting. This was the second ordeal. Big boulders, slick ice and moss, flood debris and thick brush made for tough footing. The drop itself was very narrow and would require many maneuvers to



~Mile 0.3~

avoid stopper obstacles, but since a line was impossible and a portage torturous, I decided to let her rip! I lapped some water and collided with several rocks, but otherwise managed adequately during the serpentine course of this drop at mile 0.3.

The next drop at mile 0.4 presented a similar but more difficult array of problems. It was steeper, more choked, and would require perfect sideslips and swerves to stay with the only clear course. The real possibility of broaching on a rock put a lump in my throat. After a long and painstaking scout (including peeling backwards off a boulder five feet down to a, fortunately cushioned, debris pile), I reluctantly took the plunge. All went well during the first stage on the right, but just as I set up to work the canoe hard left, I caught a small, sharp submerged rock and over I went! Lady Luck was with me on this one because I did not take a long swim before I was able to get myself and my canoe secured. Had I capsized on the upstream instead of the downstream side, it is likely that the boat would have become pinned. Also, from where I was perched, it was relatively easy to get to



~Mile 0.3~

the right shore. There was no way and no room to get far left and shoot the rest of this drop, so I was left with a rough portage on the right – which is what I should have done in the first place! The "portage" was only about 50 yards, but it lasted over half an hour and took quite a toll on my gear and me.

There was a beautiful, long and slow pool below this "ordeal drop." Upon that pool, I decided that unless the origins became more hospitable, I'd have to make an early exit.

It didn't – so I did!

I said "uncle" on the north shore of the gorge just up from the prominent side canyon at mile 0.6. There is a steep but negotiable break in the canyon wall that presented me with the last of the labors of this origin's ordeal: less than half a mile of "river" run in over three hours time! Yep, the origins was a thrill, but also an awful lot like work!

The floods of early 1993 provided the rare opportunity for this origin attempt that satisfied my ill-guided urge for completion of the entire river. Well, the urge is gone and renewed respect and reverence have taken its place; so even if such torrential times come again, I doubt I'll "give 'er a go" a second time. It was a humbling (and bumbling) experience that I'll always remember, but one I'd not wish or invite upon others. The origins remains one of my favorite places in Arizona, so I'll be back from time to time – only with my feet planted firmly on the ground. For me, I've learned: some places are just better left that way!

RIVER MILE LOG

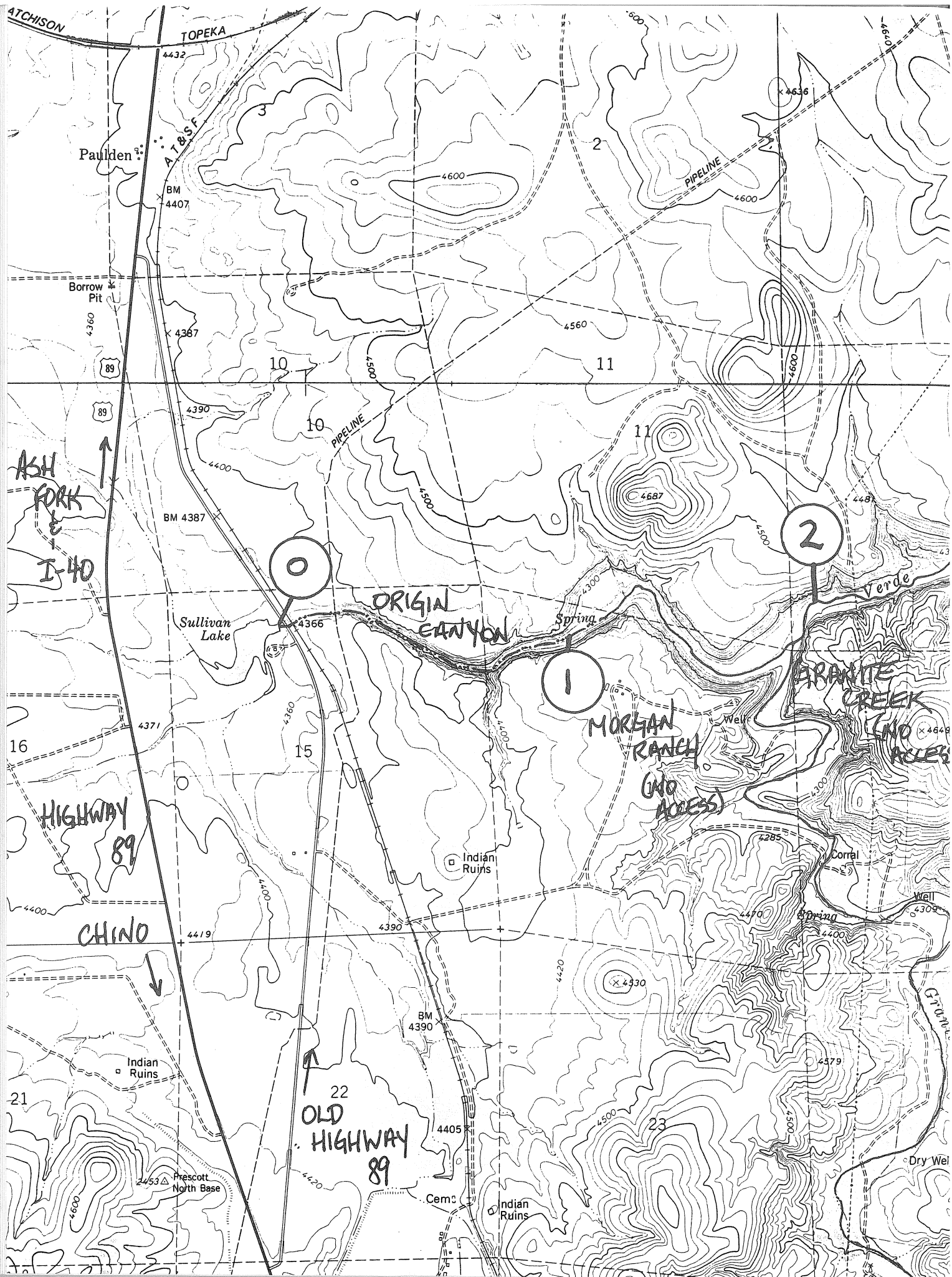
Not applicable.



**Humble Origins?
No, Humbled by the Origins!**



~Early 1993 -- Mile 0.0 - Sunset spectacle at Sullivan Lake! ~



Paulden

Borrow Pit

ASH FORK & I-40

0

Sullivan Lake

ORIGINAL CANYON

MORGAN RANCH
(NO ACCESS)

2

GRANITE CREEK
(NO ACCESS)

HIGHWAY 89

CHINO

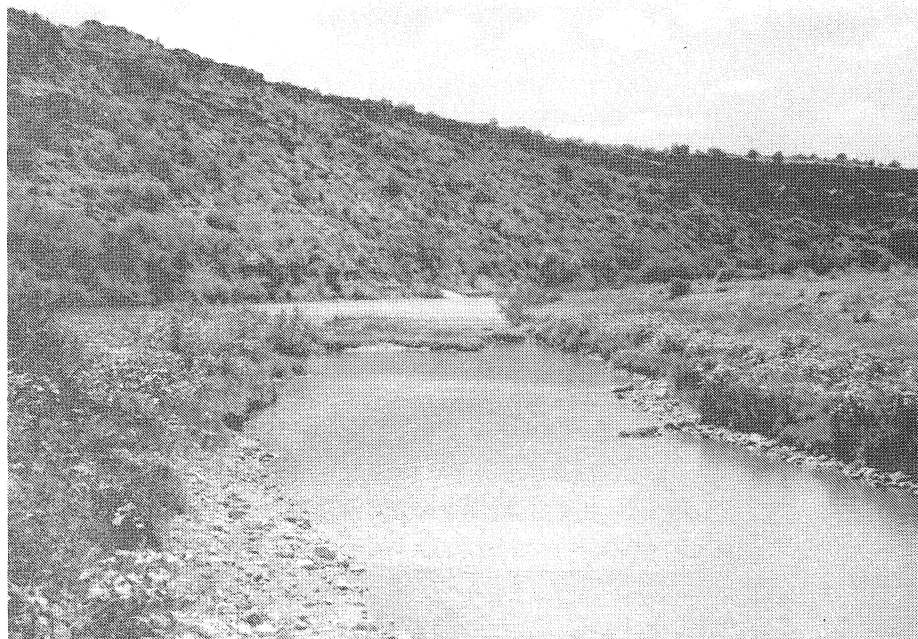
22
OLD HIGHWAY 89

Prescott North Base

Dry Well

GRANITE CREEK (M 1.8) TO FOREST ROAD 638 (M 7.1)

- Total River Miles - 5.3
- Elevation Drop - 4,240 to 4180
- Average Drop - 11 feet per mile
- Class - Class I (see the Cautions section)
- Topo Maps - Chino Valley North, Paulden, Hell Point and King Canyon
- Shuttle Time - 2 to 4 hours, or more!
- Days Needed - Half day or more



~Mile 1.8~

Looking upriver from the Granite Creek Confluence.

RIVER ACCESS POINTS

~RAPS~

Granite Creek Confluence (M. 1.8)

This is the uppermost point where the Verde is accessible by motorized vehicles. Do not enter here without written permission from the Morgan Ranch owners! There are gates and fences and the land is well posted. As emphasized earlier, private landowners around here are growing more irritable and less tolerant of intruders — especially those relative few who partake in damaging and upsetting activities. Careless and thoughtless off-roaders who parade with a six-pack and a sidearm on these lands may be reserving the right to get arrested.

Forest Road 638 - "Pipeline Road" (M. 7.1)

Forest Road 638 reaches the Verde from both the north and south. The south is the easiest. Find the Perkinsville Road turnoff from Highway 89 on the

north end of Chino Valley. Take it for 4.2 miles until you see the FR 638 turnoff on your left. It is the first turnoff after you cross Granite Creek. From the Perkinsville Road, it is 11 miles to the Verde. Turnoffs and directions may not be well marked along FR 638, so it is advisable to have your forest and topo maps with you. Although the pipeline, as locals call it, is not a passenger car road, it can be driven by high-clearance two-wheel drive vehicles. However, if it is wet, the mud flats, steep and rocky grades and sand near the river will make FR 638 only passable by four-wheelers. Watch the weather!

The northern route of FR 638 is four-wheel only and passes through more private land, so although it may appear the shorter way on the maps, it is definitely not recommended for shuttles to or from your RAP at Mile 7.1.

Old Morgan Ranch (M. 4.0)

Private and locked to all public access.

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS, HIGHLIGHTS AND CAUTIONS

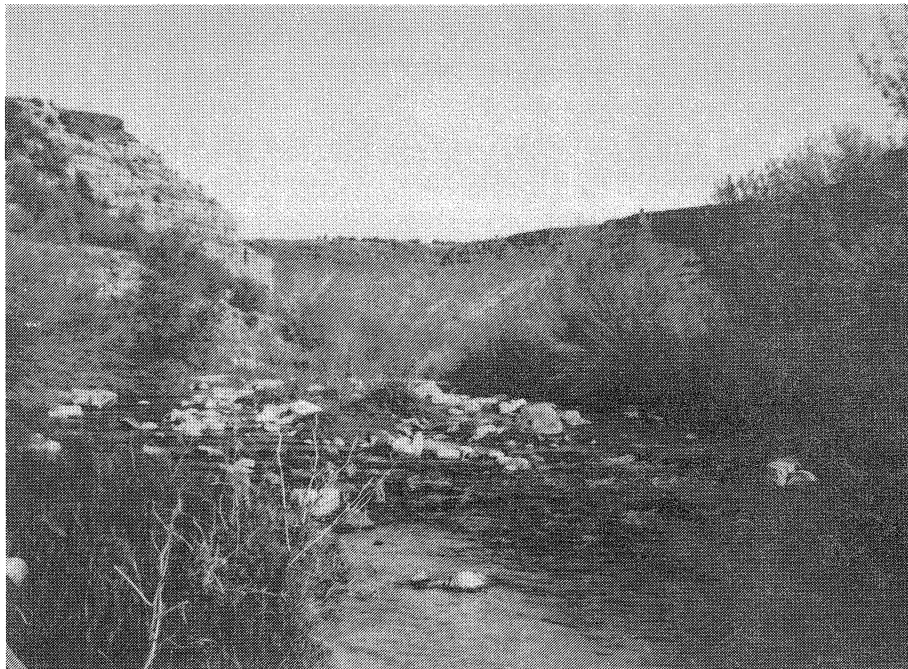
Very few floaters visit this stretch, but I include a discussion of it anyway because it is, simply, a beginning part of the whole.

Unless you have permission, or ownership and restriction conditions change in the future, you should consider the FR 638 RAP at mile 7.1 as the uppermost spot to begin any Verde adventures.

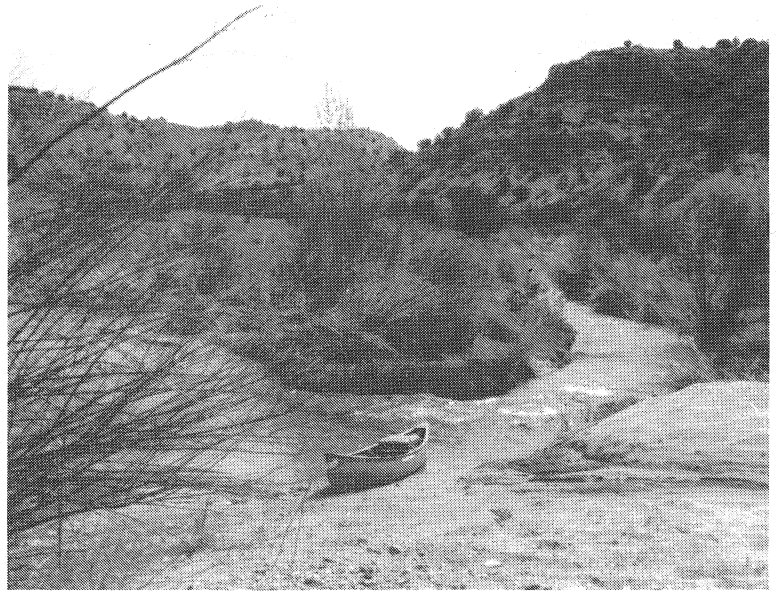
This five miles is shallow and narrow most of the year. You'll use your paddle more as a pole as you plod down this tiny and fragile creek of a river. Expect wear and tear during the countless drag-throughs. You'll be sorely disappointed if you came down here expecting a leisurely paddle-dipping cruise.

On the other hand, if this river is running high in the spring or if it is in flash flood, it can be critically dangerous for boaters. The same lush and beautiful riverside greenery that embraces you during normal flow trips will turn into the severest of strainers.

Help is a good distance away, so be careful whatever the flow!



~Mile 3.3~



~Mile 7.1 - FR 638 "Pipeline" RAP~

I float down here now and then for the primary reason that this is the first free flowing stretch of the mighty Verde. Of course, more flow, more thrills and more diverse scenery can be found farther downstream, but sometimes there is nothing like going back to the source to help put our fascinating resource back in perspective for me.

RIVER MILE LOG

Mile 1.8 - Granite Creek, the first of the Verde's major tributaries, enters on the right. This creek, so well known to Prescotttians, originates from the Sierra Prieta Mountains southwest of Prescott. It winds its way through town until it settles into Watson Lake Reservoir about four miles north of Prescott. The dam there was constructed for irrigation and water storage, but does provide some modest recreation as well.

Because of the dam and diversions, very little water makes its way to the union with the Verde except during wet times. There are some surprisingly beautiful regions along Granite Creek during its twenty or so mile meander to this private point at M. 1.8.

Most of the year, you will not be able to do anything but drag your boat for about 1/4 mile down from the Granite Creek entrance. This is tiring and terribly disruptive to the fragile marshy riverbed. Another option is to drive to the crossing at Mile 2.2. Be careful, however, of deep and soggy sands that could bog even four-wheelers.

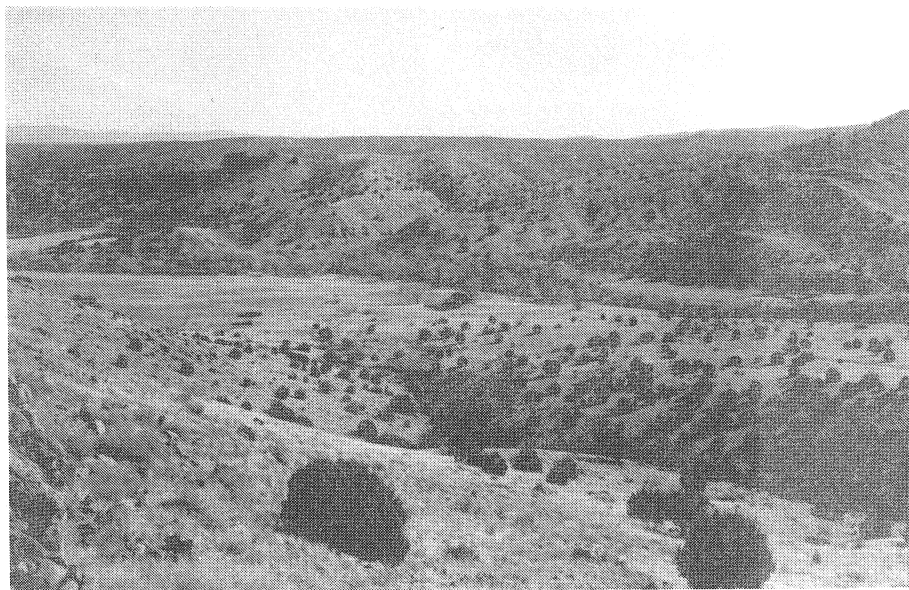
Mile 2.0 - Elevation 4,240.

Mile 2.2 - Here is the powerline, jeep crossing, and perhaps the first sign of beavers! On your left is a bench of grazing lands and on your right a colorful outcrop of rock. Formations such as these will emerge more and more below as the canyon steadily deepens and yields to the Verde.

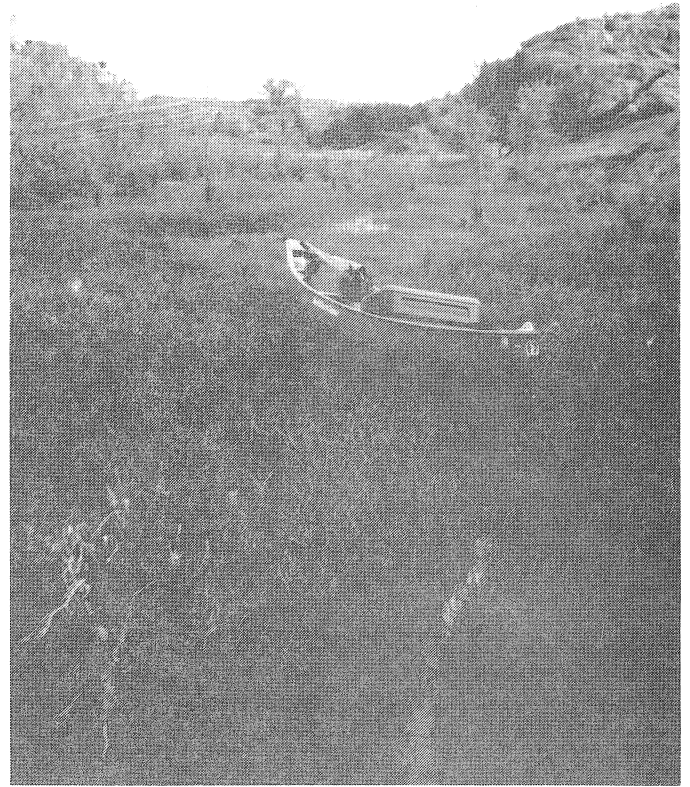
Mile 2.3 - The river pools for a bit near the cliffs allowing you to sit and paddle — actually paddle — for a while.

Mile 3.0 - Elevation 4,230.

Mile 3.3 - Here a sizable drainage enters from the right, creating an impassable rocky roadblock. At spots like these, you may wonder why you decided against putting on well downstream!



~Overlook into Mile 4.0~

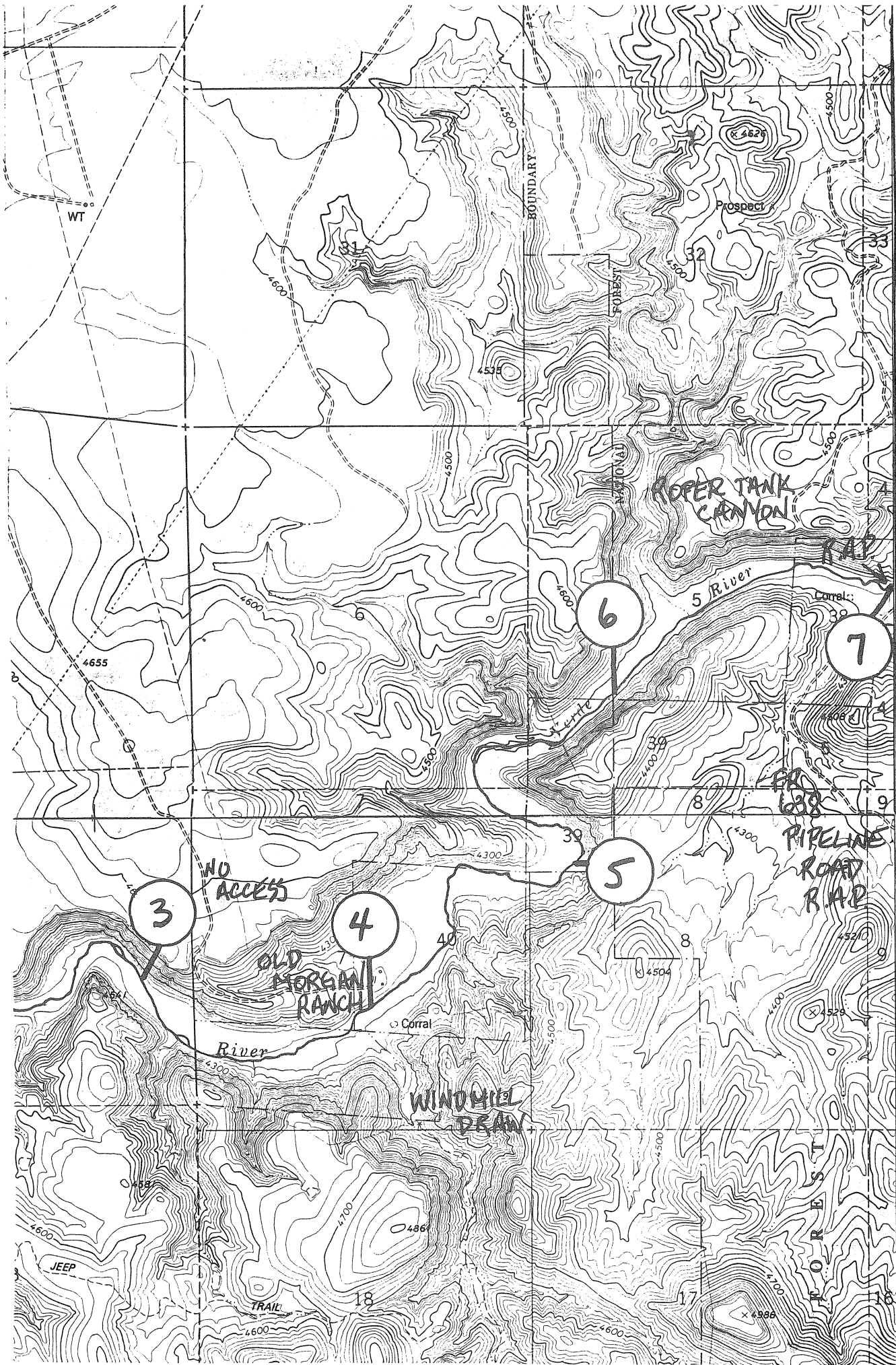


~Mile 1.9 -- Trying to be a river~

Lightly loaded canoes can avoid many drags and scrapes by attending to the subtle deeper waters. What a difference an inch makes when you are low water floating!

Mile 4.0 - Elevation 4,220 - Across from Windmill Draw on your right, you may not notice the old Morgan place on your left, but it is there just up from the fence that crosses the river. This private and historic place known also as the Stewart-Campbell Ranch was burned by intruders in the late 1980's, so now even harmless look-sees are prohibited — let it rest in peace.

Beautiful and lush riverside growth accompanies you down the broad pasture and plain for the next mile or more.



3

NO ACCESS

4

OLD MORGAN RANCH

6

5

7

WINDMILL DRAW

ROPER TANK CANYON

5 River

PIPELINE ROAD RAP

Corral:

Corral

PROSPECT

WT

BOUNDARY

NATIONAL FOREST

NATIONAL FOREST

JEEP TRAIL

TRAIL

4655

4535

4629

4500

4500

4600

4500

4655

4500

4400

4400

4300

4300

4504

4520

4520

486

4986

4600

4600

4600

4700

4700

Mile 5.0 - Elevation 4,210 — Here is a nifty region where the Verde horseshoe turns and runs a course deflecting away from steeper canyon walls. A deeper terrain begins to envelop you and the Verde from here to Mile 7.0. Take time in here to enjoy the scenery and solitude. Unspoiled by overuse and easy access, this area maintains itself as a reflective example of days gone by for much of the upper Verde.

Mile 6.0 - Elevation 4,200 - Here is a new wire fence and interesting remnants of an old wooden fence. They mark the boundary of Prescott National Forest lands. The sandy bench on the left provides nice camp spots and access for exploration of the nearby Roper Tank Canyon.

Mile 6.4 - Debris from runoff from Roper Tank Canyon chokes the river here, causing you to drag during normal flows. The elevation drop steepens from Mile 6.0 to 7.0, so be cautious in high flows.



~Mile 5.4~



~ Mile 4.1~

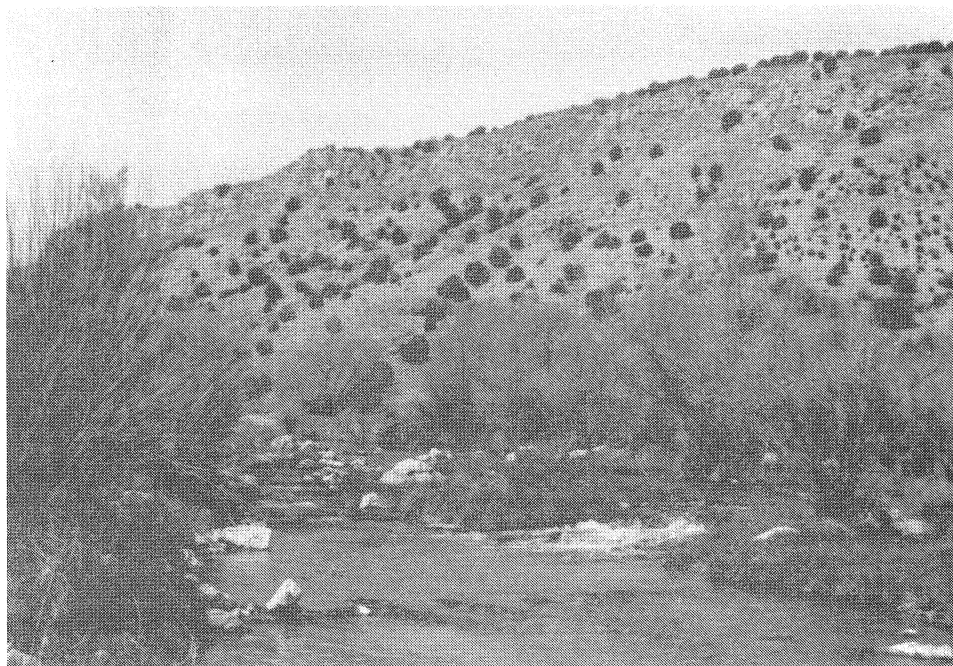
Mile 6.7 - Entering private lands again. The bench on the right is widening and you are nearing FR 638, so you can expect to see more people than you may desire.

Mile 7.0 - Elevation 4,180 - Just above the FR 638 crossing, the narrow channel of the Verde can be tangled with reeds, debris and strainers. Be aware here during all flows.

Mile 7.1 - You can't miss FR 638 — Pipeline Road Crossing. Watch out for motorized yahoos up and down this seasonally popular RAP. Irresponsible people do more than all the cattle combined to denigrate the fragile scenery of places like this. Bear (at Mile 20.4) has been closed to motorized vehicles because it was suffering the same kinds of abuse that you'll witness here. We are all partners in the guardianship of our free access lands; therefore, we all must continue to seek the delicate balance between recreation and protection. Your actions upon the river's places are the most influential components for future policies

regarding access at Mile 7.1 and all other RAPS of the Verde corridor.

~ Notes ~

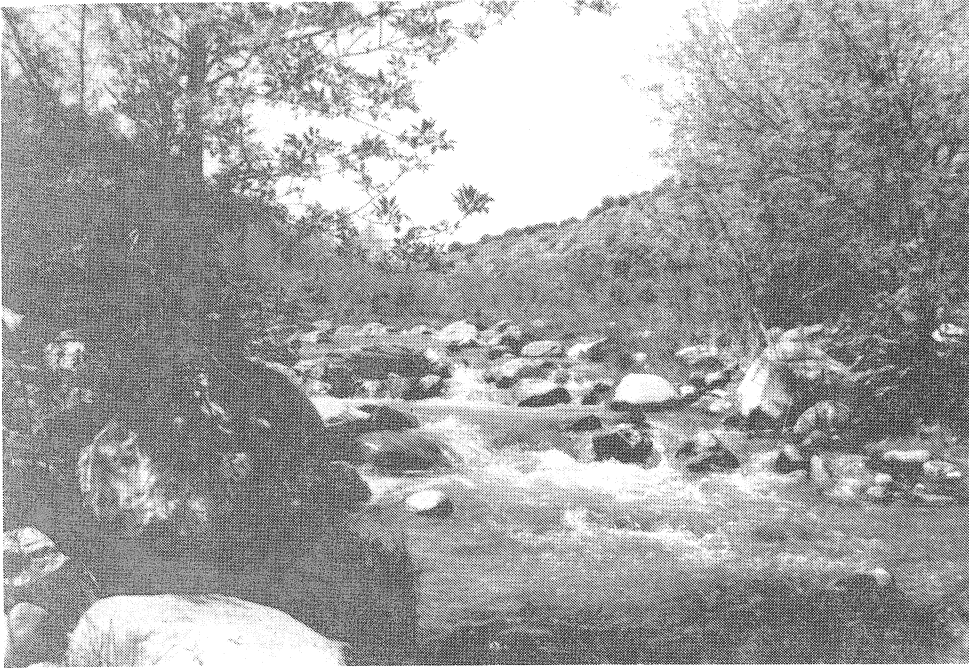


~Roper Tank Canyon - Mile 6.4~



~FR 638 - Mile 7.1 - Contrasting hobbies at Pipeline~

PIPELINE/FR 638 (M.7.1) TO PERKINSVILLE (M. 25.1)



~ "Guv Drop" - Mile 23.5~

RIVER ACCESS POINTS ~RAPS~

Pipeline/FR 638 (M.7.1) - Please refer to the previous chapter.

FR 635/Verde Ranch Area (M. 10.4) - Strictly private and you'll encounter locked gates on both the southern and northern routes to the river. Consider the Verde Ranch off limits for RAPS except in emergencies or if you have special privileges granted by the landowners. Intrusions are common down here, pinpointing this as yet another place that we infrequent river guests must adhere to the highest degree of river floating etiquette.

Tri-Canyon and Hell Point (M. 18.0) - Free access is to the canyon rims only. Disregard these as floater RAPS. Bear is very close anyway.

FR 492A/Bear Siding/U.S. Mines (M. 20.5) - This is a good RAP. Although riverside vehicle access has been restricted for the reasons cited earlier, you'll only have a short carry to the river. Bear to Perkinsville makes for a lovely day run with an easy

- Total River Miles - 18.0
- Elevation Drop - 4,180 to 3,810
- Average Drop - 20 feet per mile
- Class - Low water boating class I and II (refer to the Cautions section)
- Topo Map - Paulden, Chino Valley North, Hell Point, King Canyon, Perkinsville and Munds Draw
- Shuttle Time - Three to four hours
- Days Needed - Two is really pressing. Plan 3 days or more.

shuttle. Give it a try to see if low water floating strikes your fancy.

Bear is reached off the Drake/Perkinsville FR 492. Signs mark it well, and it is usually passable with good clearance two-wheel vehicles.

Perkinsville Road Bridge (M. 25.1) - This major RAP can be reached four different ways. All are two-wheel accessible under normal conditions, but you are advised to inquire locally during wet times. Although the following roads are well marked, it is a good idea to have your Prescott National Forest maps with you.

From Chino Valley - Take the Perkinsville Road (FR 354) for 20 miles to the bridge.

From Jerome - It is 18 miles along FR 318. FR 318 is one of the most scenic drives of the entire Verde River corridor.

From Highway 89/Drake Turnoff - About 15 miles north of Chino Valley, you'll see signs to Drake. From that turnoff it is about 15 miles more along FR 680, 492 and 354 to the river.

From Williams - Floaters coming from the northern parts of the state likely will find this their road of choice. From downtown Williams, take the Perkinsville Road (FR 173, 492 and 354) for about 35 miles to the Verde. The majority of the miles are paved and the whole of it is as lovely as can be.

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS, HIGHLIGHTS AND CAUTIONS

For reasons explained later, I refer to this as the "Walk and Run" stretch of the Verde.

This section and the short one upriver account for the two least commonly boated areas of the entire Verde. For me, that is the primary reason that I put this float on my yearly spring list. From Pipeline access it may not seem very appealing as a true wilderness run, but all you have to do is persevere for a day and you'll be treated to one of the most awe-inspiring pieces of unspoiled river canyon anywhere on the entire 200 miles of Verde River magic. The mid-section of this run can only be reached by hikers and floaters and occasional horsemen with true grit in their bones. Miles 14 to 18 are a low water boater's paradise of solitude and scenery.

I've not run this section during heavy flow, nor do I have first-hand reports from anyone who has. It is my



~Perkinsville Bridge - Mile 25.1~

guess though that one would be in for a hazardous and challenging run. The twenty-feet-per-mile average drop (with some thirties) coupled with the tight turns and trees should render this stretch off limits to all except the highly skilled and prepared. Even in normal to low flows, the likelihood of pins on rocks and strainers is high.

Expect slow going and long miles during this stretch of the Verde during normal flow. If you paddle a heavily loaded tandem canoe, it may be a laborious task to cover only five miles in a day. Going solo, you may find some easier times; but even if you ride as high as a water strider and work as hard as a beaver, you'll be lucky to cover ten.

There are enough lovely small pools to enjoy some actual paddling moments, but on the whole you'll find yourself zagging and zigging among the countless low spots that are just waiting to bump you around or bring you to a grinding halt. Take your time



~Duff Drop (Pre - '93) - M. 14.8~

and bring your patience to fully enjoy this "Walk and Run" stretch.

As hard as you may try to play the paddling game of "find the deeper water" (usually the first offering you see near a shore), you will inevitably be forced to walk your boat down some places. In the sandy flats, it is okay to grab your bow painter and mule team your canoe to deeper water. However, in the rocky drops, always walk upstream of your boat or line it from the shore. Even in the most innocent looking walk-throughs, there will always be some push and deep spots around the rocks.

A misstep could cause serious injury. Be careful, wear proper footwear and use your canoe as a buoy.



~Mile 17.0~

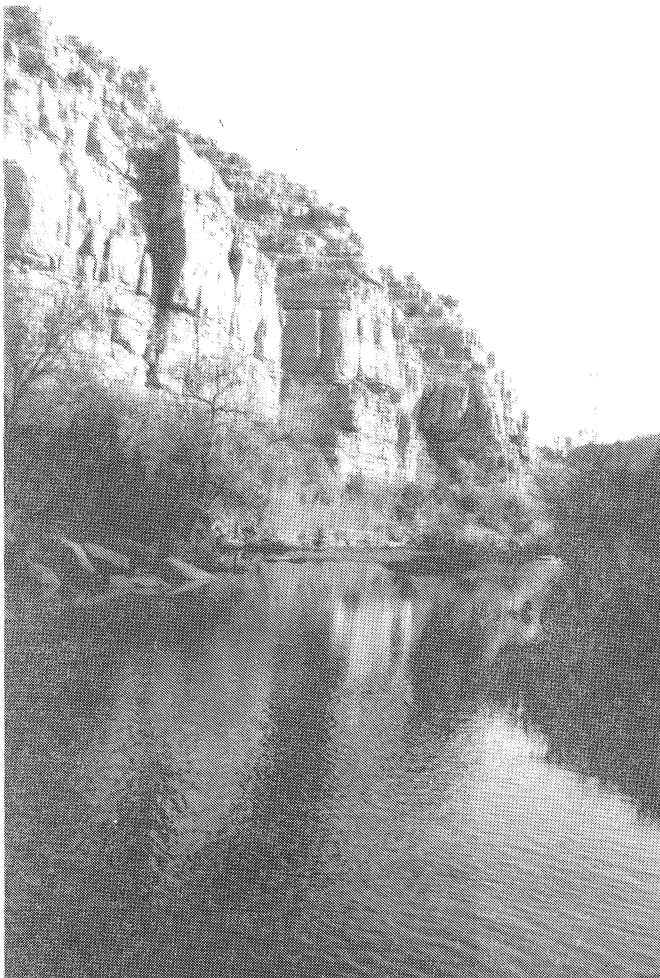
You have to read the river just as cautiously while walking as you do on the run during this unique trip.

Most "drops" can hardly be classed as rapids during normal flow, but they are noted on the topos for reference none the less.

Because I love to "Walk and Run" this part of the Verde, I keep an old Coleman around. It is the only craft that I worry not about subjecting to such abuse. Those Colemans are sturdy buggers and despite the mess of metal and cussword keel, they are the barge that I'd recommend for the upper Verde.

On the subject of gear — it is also recommended to bring an extra sturdy paddle or two. Don't bring your old fave that you use on full water trips because it is likely to get mighty chewed up.

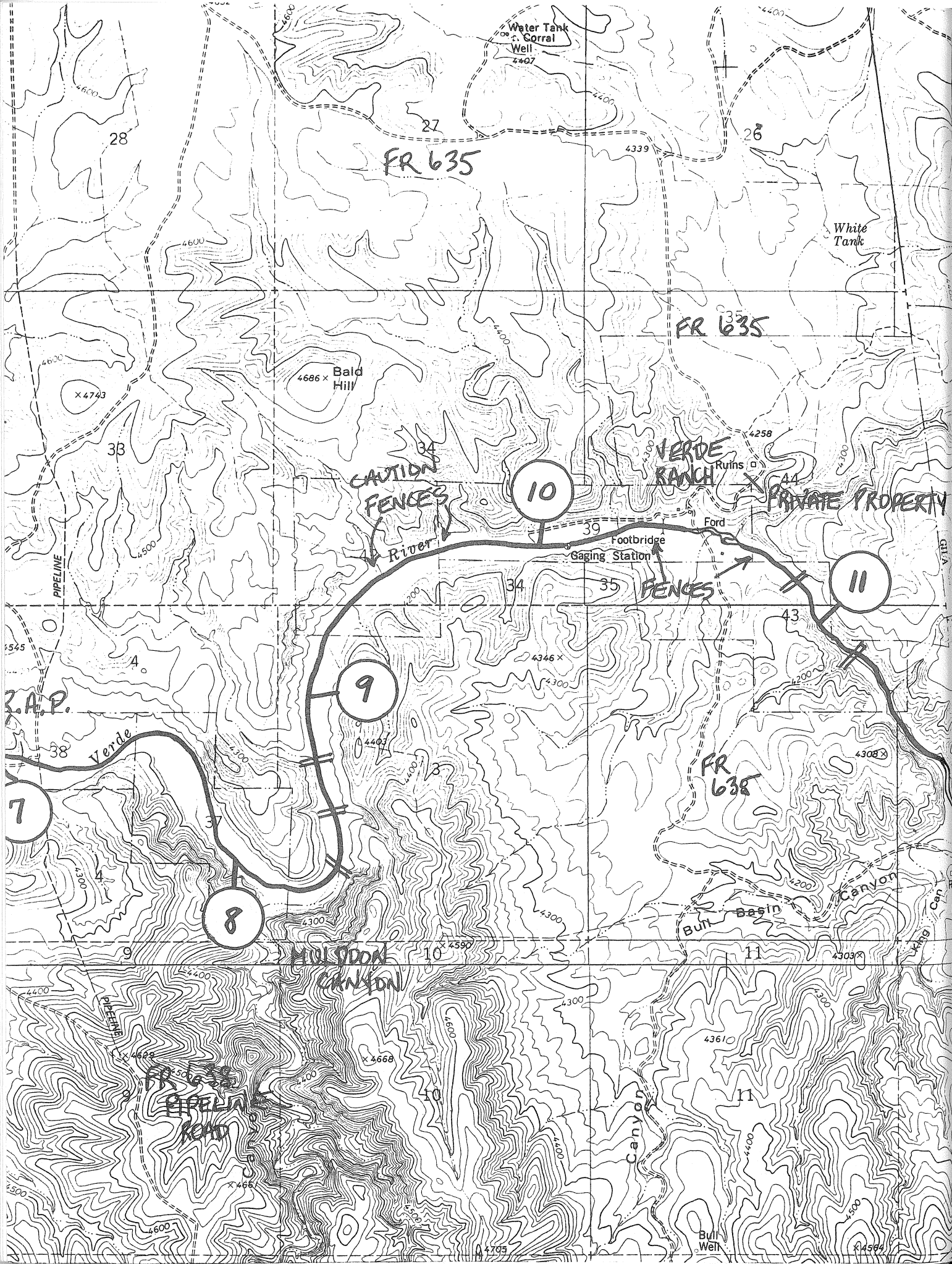
Now, to the river — go with care and peace upon this wonder"full", unparalleled and pristine place of the "Walk and Run."



~Mile 16.4~

RIVER MILE LOG

Mile 7.1 - Elevation 4,180 - Pipeline FR 638 RAP. You are technically on private land here, and it is possible that the landowners may fence it off someday. I dread the notion . . . Unfortunately, many of the



lands for a mile or so.

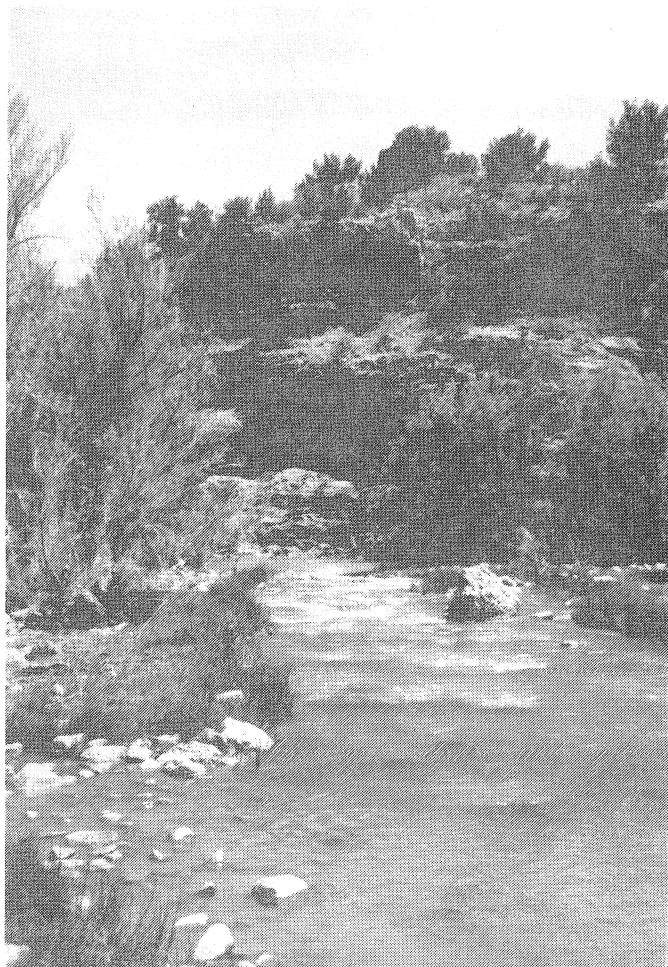
Mile 8.4 - Muldoon Canyon enters on the right. Muldoon was named for Ferrell Teirman who was reported to be a strong "Muldoon" of a man. "Muldoon" was a cavalry soldier from Camp Verde who turned cattleman and settled near here around the turn of the century.

The outflow from Muldoon Canyon has created a long rock-knocking drop that must be walked in places. Here you get your first taste of what you'll become accustomed to during the next 17 miles!

Mile 8.5 - From here to M. 9.0 you'll find a couple of drops punctuated by lovely pools.

Mile 8.9 - The small side canyon on the left has created a noteworthy descent of around five vertical feet.

Mile 9.0 - Elevation 4,140 - The terrain flattens on the right where you'll see the first pasture fencing and evidences of the Verde Ranch operations. The river channel is very shallow and braids itself to and from all the way to the fence at M. 9.5. Camping anywhere from M. 9.5 to well past M. 11.0 is prohibited. Watch for strainers during the next stretch of this tight and tweeky channel.



~Bear/U.S. Mines RAP - M. 20.4~

motorized visitors couldn't care less. Too many take their destructive forays up and down miles 6.0 to 8.5 and leave a lot of garbage in their wakes.

I spend only the necessary time to gear up and give some people a piece of my mind before I head down and away from this burdened area.

If you had visited Pipeline before the floods of '93, you would hardly recognize it as the same place now. Floods scour but they also enrich, so in time it'll all come back as lush as before.

Mile 8.0 - Elevation 4,160 - This first mile drops at a steady rate through the Pipeline Flats. After M. 8.0, the canyon narrows a little more and you soon enter public



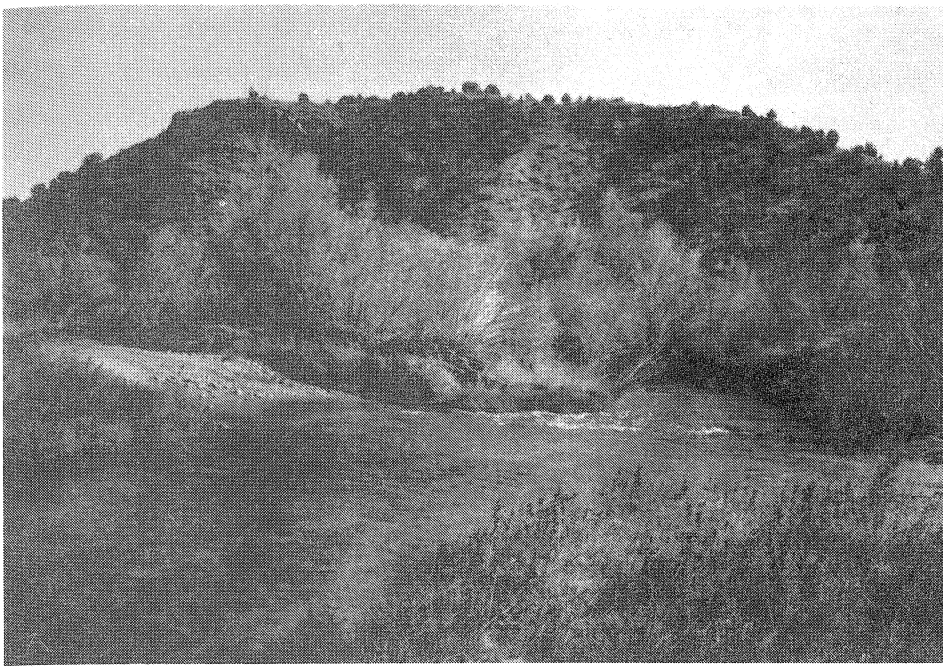
~Cliff Dwelling - Mile 14.1~



cease to exist once the Verde reclaims its norm after the turmoil of early '93.

The river winds through some pretty areas around M. 11.5, and you once again enter public lands.

Mile 12.0 - Elevation 4,090 - Now you begin to get the flavor of what's to come. King Canyon and Bull Basin Canyon enter into a now restricted access area and the corridor seems to be retaking a natural and remote state. The canyon walls start to close in and the Verde begins a muleshoe course into the gorgeous heart of your float from Pipeline to Perkinsville.



~Pipeline RAP - M.7.1 (Pre - '93) Looking East~

Mile 10.0 - Elevation 4,120 - Immediately downstream from M. 10, you'll see a flow gauge on the right and a trolley to service it. This remote gauge serves as a flood warning gauge and as a read for the downstream users. It is the first of several similar cylinders that you'll see between here and Horseshoe Reservoir.

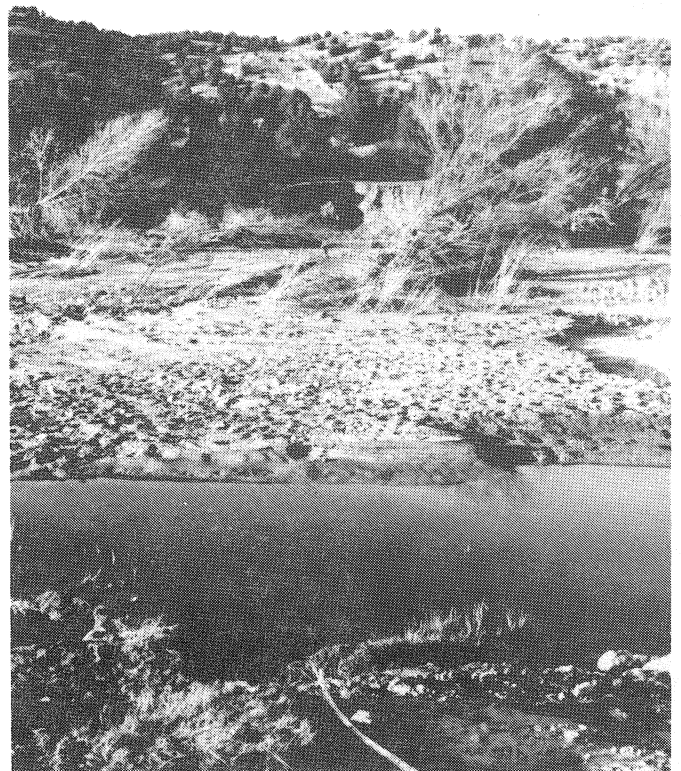
Between miles 10 and 11, you'll be treated to one of the most beautiful pieces of private Verde real estate. And, I do mean private! As mentioned earlier, the gates on FR 635 are locked to entry from both the north and south. As a floater you have every right to pass by upon the water, but any other intrusions upon this ranch property are illegal unless expressly permitted by the owners. This is a gorgeous and historic place well deserving of our quiet respect.

Floaters should watch carefully for the two fences at miles 10.3 and 10.6. Usually, the flow is low enough to lift the wire and run your boat under.

Other cautions around the Verde Ranch include strainers around M. 10.7 and a newly created funnel-like drop at M. 10.8. "New Ranch Drop" is an abrupt five-foot plunge that may be best lined from the right side.

Mile 11.0 - Elevation 4,100 - The Verde pools here for a while until you encounter a bowl-shaped three-foot drop. This drop, like the one just above, likely will

Mile 13.0 - Elevation 4,080 - The ruins plotted on the topos at M. 12.0 and near M. 13.1 are worth a visit, but all you are likely to find are trampled and nondescript mounds — testaments to what happens to



~M. 7.1 (Post-'93) Looking North~

ancient dwellings when they are easily accessible and noted on public maps.

Mile 13.6 - Gold Basin Canyon enters on the right and you'll run a characteristic drop through the Canyon's rubble. From below this drop, the Verde is shallow, sandy and braided most of the distance to Duff Spring.

Mile 14.0 - Elevation 4,050 - A visit to the cliff dwelling above M. 14.2 is highly recommended for anyone able to make the steep climb. The views up and down river are spectacular. The Sinagua or Hohokam (or?) who built here no doubt chose this roost because of the southern aspect and visual span allowing them forewarning from any hostile intruders.

Mile 14.6 - There is another long pinball run much like the one at Gold Canyon. Be patient; it gets better! — or worse, depending upon your frame of mind.

Mile 14.8 - From here to past M. 15.0, you are in for a nearly constant steep and choked descent through "Duff Drop" and "Duff's Gauntlet." Nearly the whole of the thirty-foot drop of this mile is right here, so use great care in knocking and walking until you reach stiller waters.



~M. 10.1 - Gauge - Post '93~

Your efforts in negotiating the dogleg turn and drops at Duff will be clearly rewarded when you view the unfolding beauty downstream. You've crossed the threshold and you are into the majesty of the canyon heart of this run.

Mile 15.0 - Elevation 4,020 - There are several small drops in the next mile, but because the canyon narrows and restricts the waters to a more definable channel, you are more likely to be able to enjoy the peace while paddling. Soon the Verde will conclude its serpentine and muleshoe pattern and head nearly due north for awhile.

Mile 16.0 - Elevation 4,000 - I always try to plan to camp on the left shore around M. 16.



~Mile 10.1 - Gauge - Pre-'93 Floods~



~ Mile 12.4 ~

Nowhere along the Verde except Morman Pocket (Miles 31-34) will you find such spectacular and steep walls of colorful stone so close to the water's edge. Kicking back and watching the fading sun play upon this scene is an unforgettable experience.

Just below M. 16.0, you'll face rocky going and countless potential hangups. The same goes at M. 16.5 where the first major break in the canyon walls on the left has deposited reminders of past flash floods.

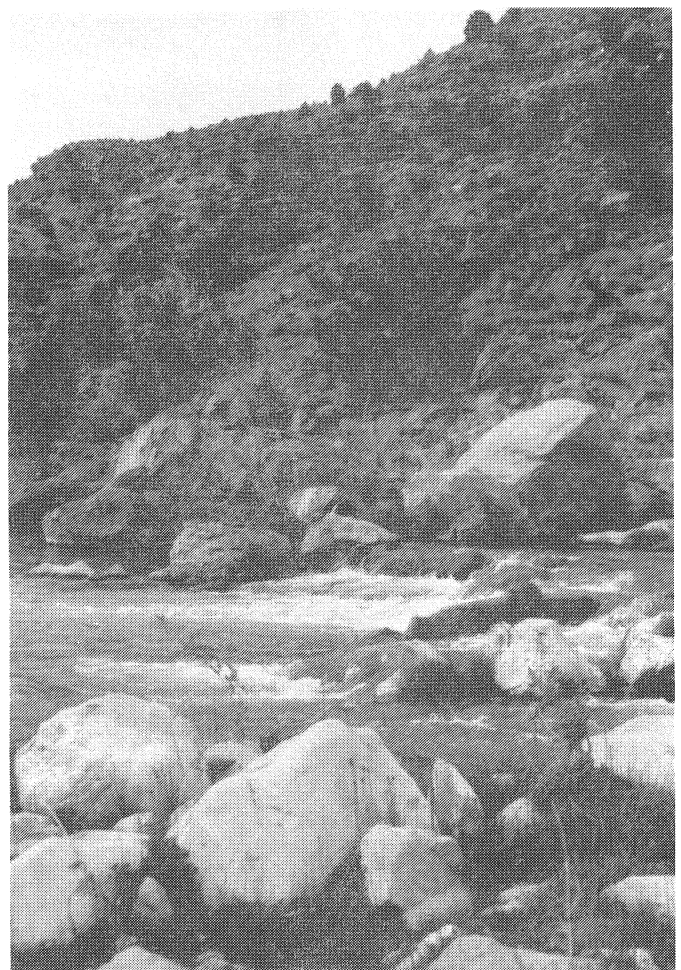
Mile 16.8 - In the next half mile, you'll encounter at least three places where larger boulders dominate the channel. "Boulders One" is here at M. 16.8.

Mile 17.0 - Elevation 3,970 - "Boulders Two." This spot and "Boulders Three" at M. 17.2 may appear of the nonchalant variety, but you may be faced with tricky footing if you get hung up — use care here and there.

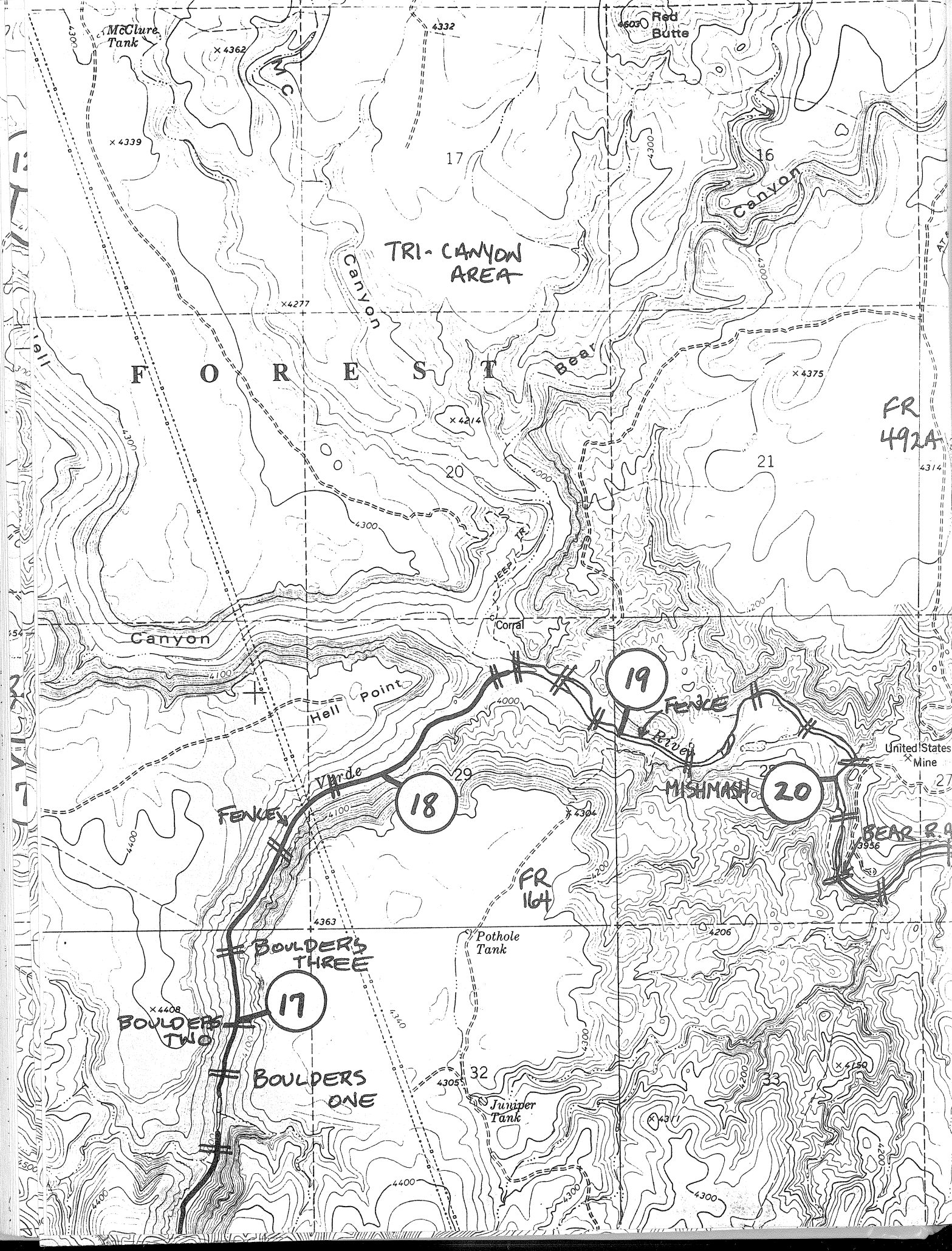
Mile 17.6 - Just after you do yet more rock dodging, you'll see the fence at M. 17.6. If the flow is any higher than normal, you'll want to plan well to avoid a tangle with this wire. There definitely can be more push to the flow at this fence than those you undercrossed near the Verde Ranch. There is no private land here, so perhaps this fence indicates a forest land lease boundary for the ranchers in the Tri-Canyon area at M. 18.5.

Mile 17.8 - 500 kilo-volts of APS power hovers above you. These transmission lines come from the controversial coal-fired Navajo Generating Plant in Page and head to the power hungry Valley of the Sun.

In those parts, so near the Grand Canyon, battles rage to this day over the needs for power and the rights to be free from visual pollution. Compromises and emission controls may be forthcoming. For our little Verde canyon, the towers and wires signify, almost on cue, the widening of the walls and the end of the most scenic part of this river stretch.



~ Mile 14.9 - End of "Duff's Gauntlet"



McClure Tank

Red Butte

TRI-CANYON AREA

F O R E S T

FR 492A

United States Mine

Boulders THREE

Boulders TWO

Boulders ONE

X 4362

4332

X 4339

17

16

X 4277

X 4214

X 4375

21

20

19

18

20

27

17

FR 164

Pothole Tank

4206

X 4408

4340

Juniper Tank

4305

32

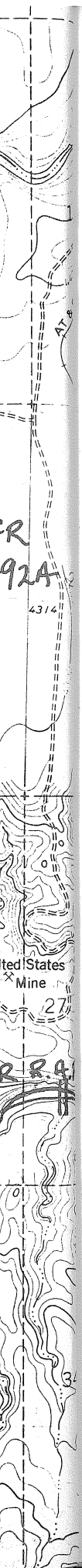
33

X 4150

X 4371

4400

4300



~ Mile 15.0 - Looking down canyon to the heart of the run ~

Mile 18.0 - Elevation 3,950 - For the next half mile, the Verde flows relatively slowly through wide channels with some beautiful pools and shady areas. The majority of the elevation drop comes with the meeting of Hell Canyon at M. 18.5.

Mile 18.5 - Here is the biggest drainage system to enter the Verde since its inception. As you'll notice, one "Hell" of a lot of water and rubble join the river at this Tri-Canyon region during torrential times. Even during dry times the Verde's flow is quietly replenished by subterranean springs and seep from Hell, Bear and MC Canyons (named for 1880's rancher N. McCullum).

After you run the Tri-Canyon rock gardens at M. 18.6, you should consider getting out of your boat and exploring a while in this intriguing and history-rich area. There are no occupied dwellings on this small private parcel and it is unlikely that your presence will be questioned. Still, treat it with care, close all fences and leave no trace of your walkabout.

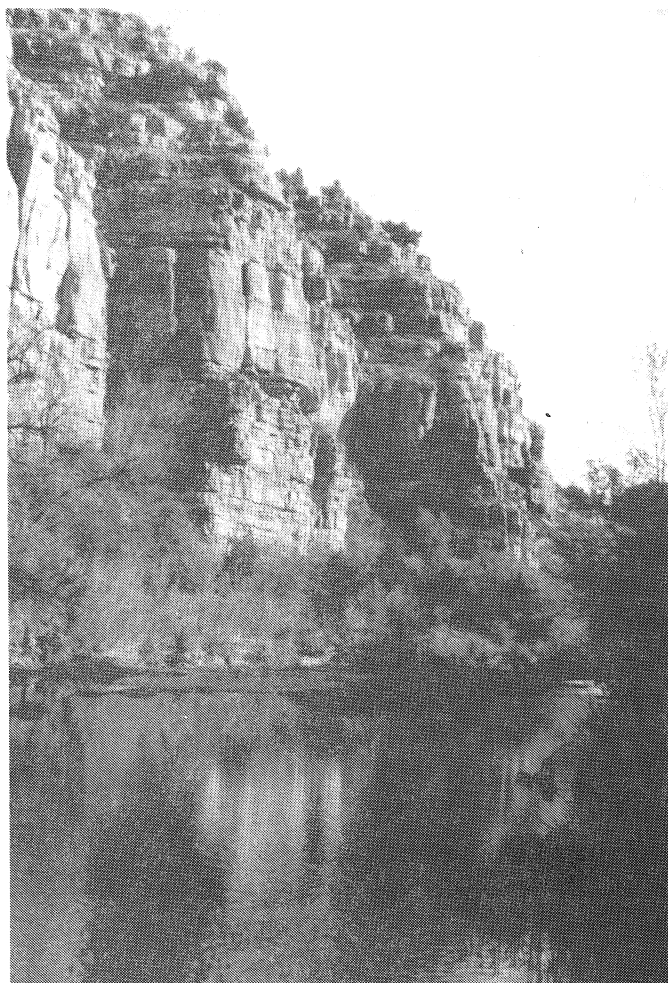
Below Tri-Canyon, you'll paddle a pool for a while. It was here that I saw the first fresh sign of beaver after the floods of '93.

Mile 18.7 - Where the topos show two, you'll now see one main channel that has two long and shallow riffles.

Mile 19.0 - Elevation 3,920 - The next mile is spotted with lovely pools, small riffles, mish-mashes of walk throughs, shady and nifty moments, frequent twists and turns and a new wire fence at M. 19.1. Remnants of the old-style water gap can still be seen upon the left shore.

Mile 20.0 - Elevation 3,900 - Here is a nice deep pool followed by a riffle. You are likely to start seeing anglers who have accessed the river from nearby FR 492A.

Mile 20.4 - After Pipeline and Perkinsville, this is the next most frequently used RAP of the entire Upper Verde. Bear was locked to riverside motor access in the early 1990's, but it is still receiv-



~ Mile 16.4 ~



~ Mile 17.2 - "Boulders Three" ~

ing heavy use by campers and baitcasters. It is a pretty area with undercut cliffsides, small pools, squirrely little drops (miles 20.4, 20.6 and 20.9), plentiful wildlife and colorful landscapes. The whole area is making a quick recovery from the years of motorized abuse up, down and in the river.

Mile 21.0 - Elevation 3,880 - Just prior to M. 21.0, you'll paddle a gorgeous pool below steep limestone cliffs on the right. You may glimpse the first sign of the Arizona Central Railroad climbing out of the Perkinsville area. This feature will increase in visibility and prominence as you proceed downriver for the next twenty miles.

Just after M. 21.0, you'll encounter a rock bar and lengthy shallow pool. Then you'll see more low level rock bars, pools, walk spots, a downed fence at M. 21.7, and finally a myriad of the same at the horseshoe turn before M. 22.0. It's etcetera, etcetera as you pick away at the thirty-foot drop of this river mile.

Mile 22.0 - Elevation 3,850 - Here is an unusual spot. At M. 22.0 the

Verde during normal flow will flush you over a small channel-wide shelf of limestone. In time, the cutting power of water and sand will halve and dismember this unique feature. For now, the formation presents itself as an interesting place to stop and ponder the inevitable.

The remainder of M. 22 is a characteristic tour of low water floating and footing pleasure.

Mile 23.0 - Elevation 3,830 - It is hard to pick any place between Bear and Perkinsville that is the highlight, but M. 23 may be it! Numerous small canyons, narrow slits in the walls, secretive

places and shaded pools just beckon you to take the time to explore around here.

Mile 23.5 - Government Canyon and "The Guv Drop." With Arizona's notoriety in the Guv category, who could resist the nomiker for this rocky and noteworthy spot! Almost the entire vertical change of this river mile is accounted for at this place. "Guv Drop" descends at least ten feet in twenty yards, so floaters should reapply their cautions and be readily prepared



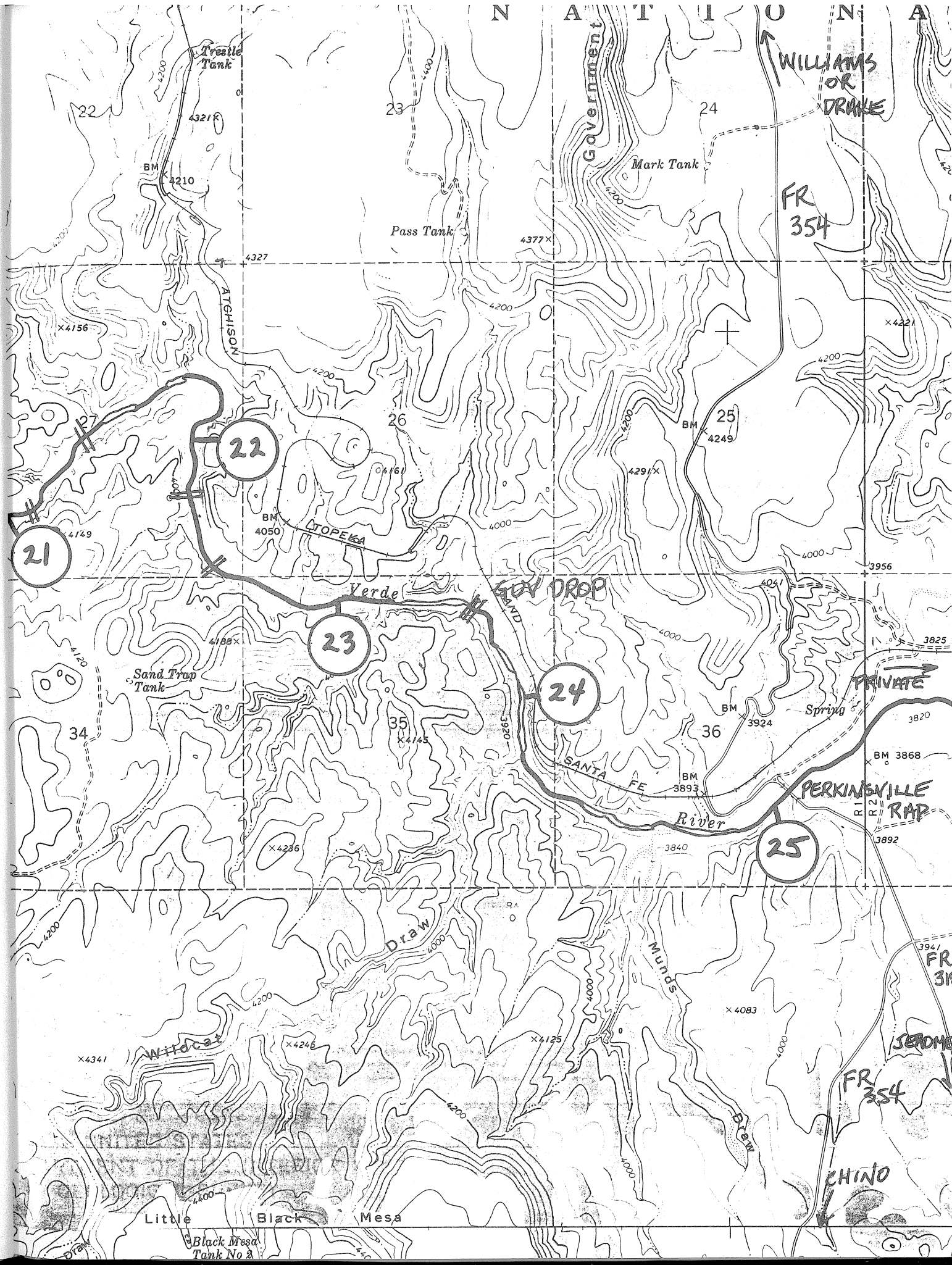
~ Mile 18.5 - Old stone cabin near Hell Canyon ~

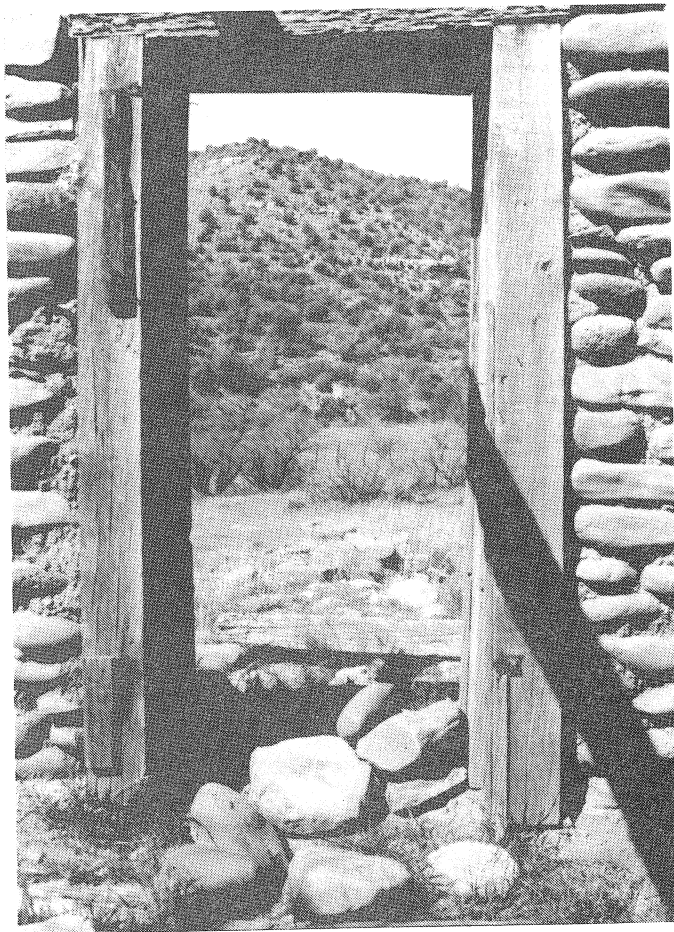
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~ Mile 18.5 - A different threshold ~

for boulder hopping. In higher than normal flow, a scout is mandatory here.



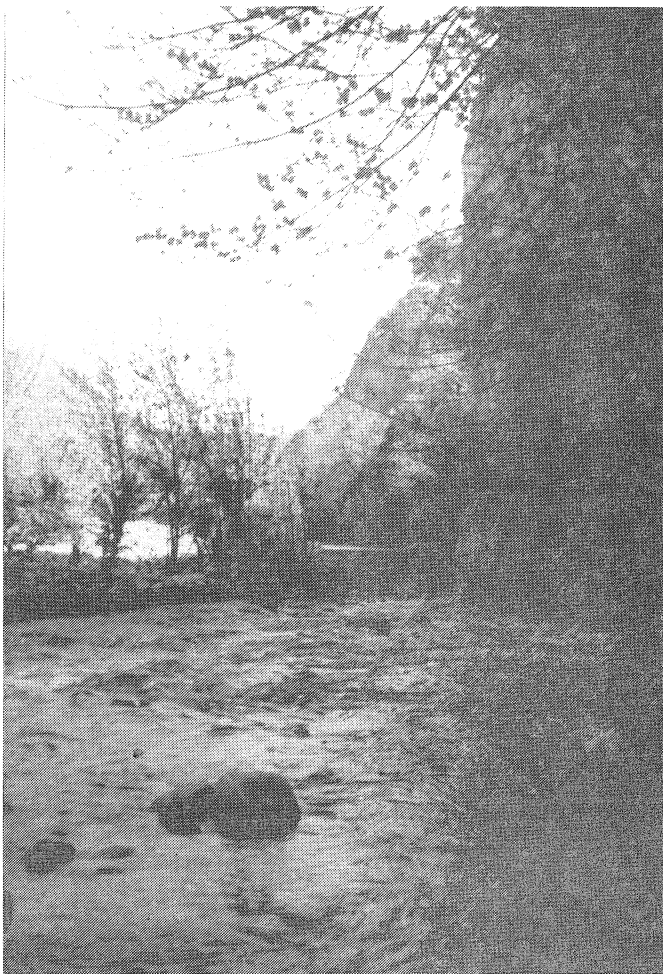
~ Mile 20.4 - No more vehicles! ~

In pre-'93 runs I was able to rock knock a clear course down the rubble-strewn mess of a channel, but on post flood runs, it was impossible. The turmoil of '93 has created an unrunnable myriad of rocks, debris and split channels. In future years, it is very likely that the Verde will claim its new channel on the far left and run nearer the wall. Just as you hit the drop, you'll see the formidable Government Canyon trestle on the left.



~ Mile 20.4 - Nice riffle at the Old Bear ford ~

Mile 24.0 - Elevation 3,820 - From river level, Wildcat Draw at M. 24.2 looks to be another inviting place to hike. Curiously, this significant canyon has created little or no litter at its mouth with the river.



~ Mile 23.0 ~

Mile 24.6 - Here you may come across the diversion channel for the Perkins Ranch. Most of their efforts were devastated by the floods, but it is surely something they will rebuild when the time is right. Be careful in the narrow channels around here because of the strainers and the low level drops created by Munds Draw at M. 24.6.

Munds was named for John L. Munds, the Sheriff of Yavapai County around 1900; and his legacy is noted here as well as at Munds' Park and Munds' Canyon south of Flagstaff on I-17. From Munds' on down to the bridge, you can expect to see people of all sorts who recreate around this most easily accessed and heavily impacted reach of the Upper Verde.

Mile 25.1 - Elevation 3,810 - Perkinsville Road Bridge. You'll find the easiest access on river left either upstream or downstream of the bridge.

This stalwart bridge dates to the 1930's, making it the oldest of the original roadway spans of the Verde. The

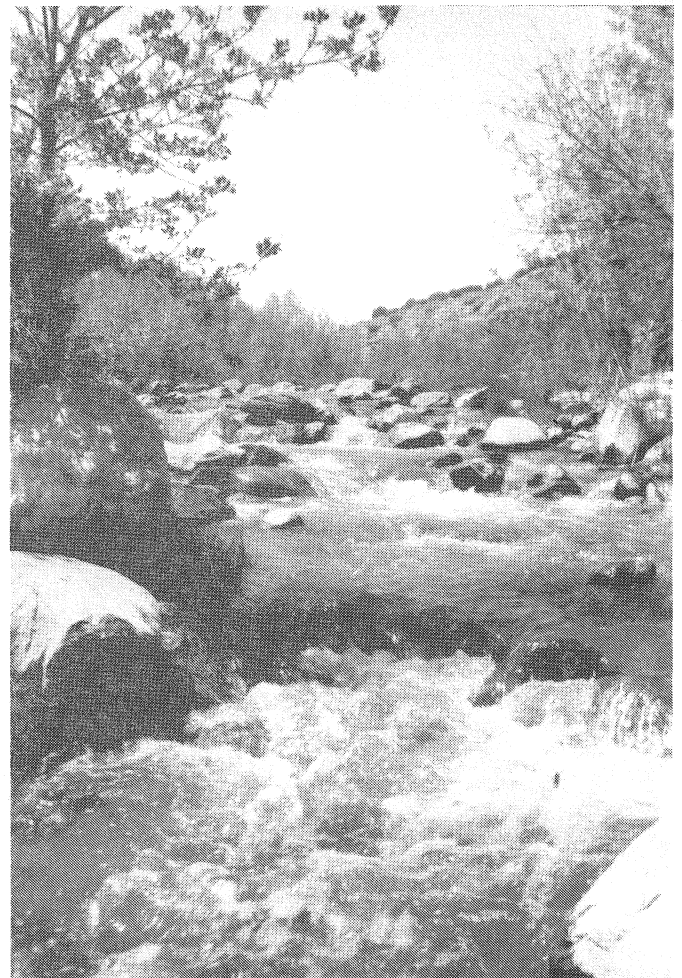
Civilian Conservation Corps certainly did their work well because this structure has withstood years of severe floods and required minimal, if any, repair.

Take-Out - I hope that you enjoyed your "Run and Walk" on the Upper Verde. Count yourself among the relative fortunate few who have boated above Perkinsville. While you now know why many don't give it a try, you also know now why they should!

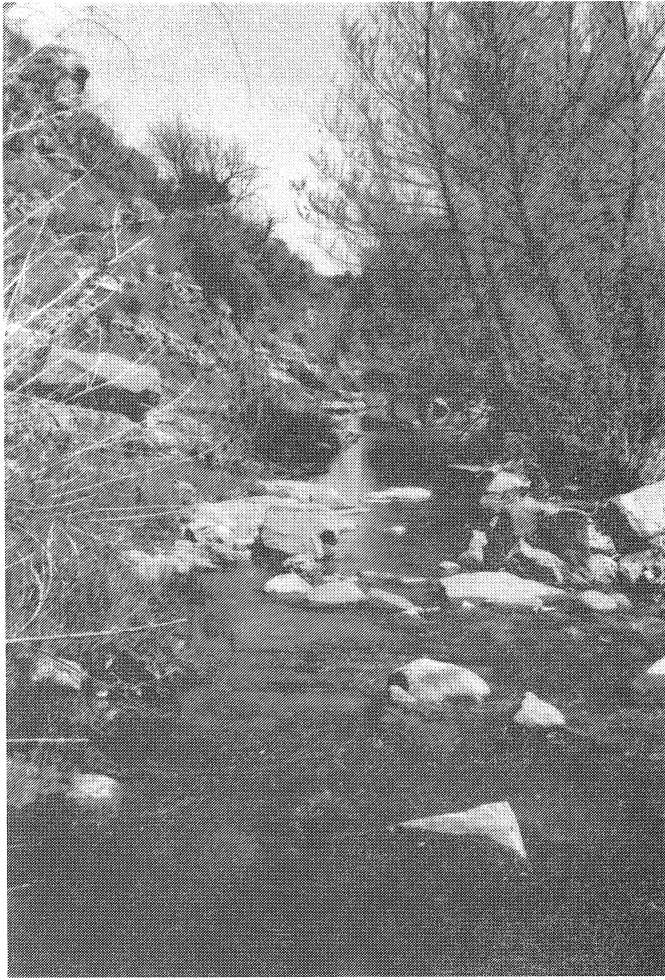
PERKINSVILLE HISTORY

The Perkinsville region was first settled by James Baker in 1876. Baker later entered into a partnership with John Campbell and together they ran thousands of cattle under the "76" brand.

In the late 1890's, Marion Perkins tired of the growing numbers of settlers in Texas and began a pilgrimage with his family in search of more open and fertile range. His travels led him to the "76" Ranch in 1899 where he promptly purchased the squatter's rights



~ Mile 23.5 - "Guv Drop" ~



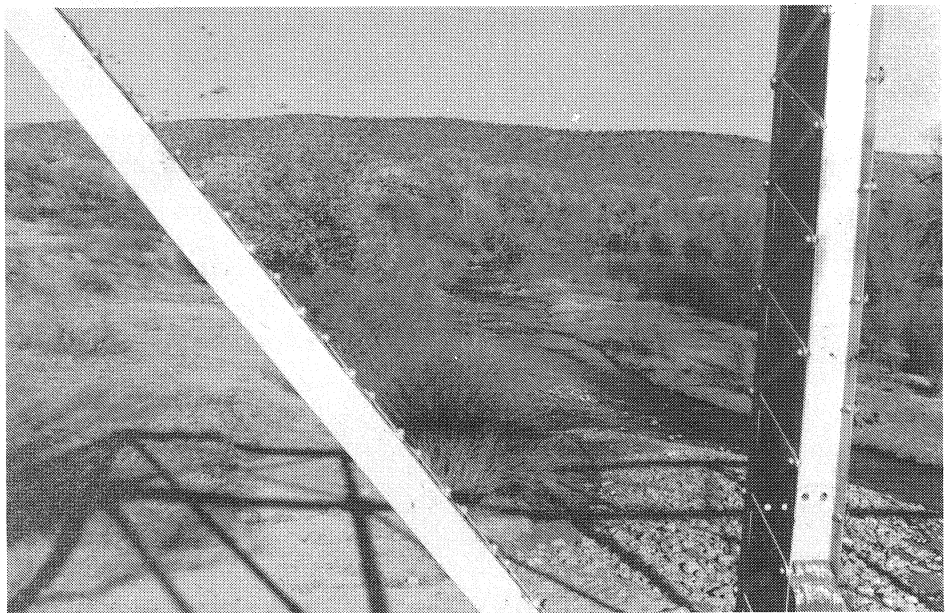
~ Mile 24.7 ~

from Baker and Campbell. The first Perkins' cattle arrived from Texas just in time for the new century, and Marion's dreams started to unfold. Since then, Marion and Annie Perkins' direct descendents have maintained the Perkins Ranch in their own image of hard work, perseverance and family traditions. A browse in the Chino and Prescott libraries for more about the Perkins family history would be well worth your time. Their roots and these lands hold many rich stories.

The Perkins Ranch area did not start to become known also as Perkinsville until the arrival of the railroad in 1911. (Refer to the next chapter for more details on the railroad.) The general public is not allowed into the old Perkinsville site, but the thousands

of Arizona Central passengers will see the old passenger and freight depot, school house and other buildings as the tourist train makes its turnabout just north of M. 26.

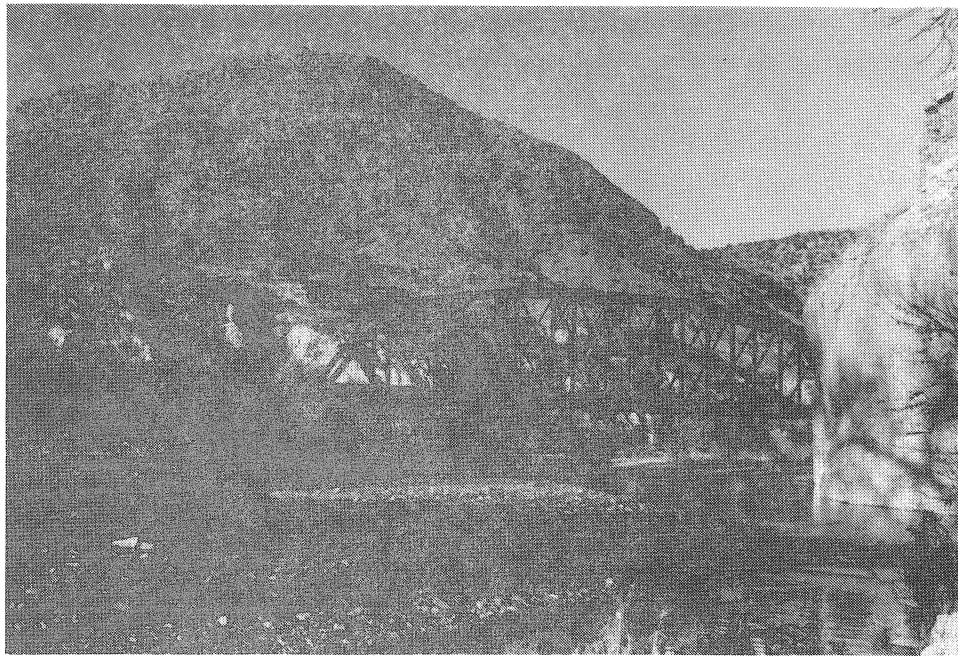
~ Notes ~



~ Mile 25.1 - Perkinsville Road Bridge ~

PERKINSVILLE (M.25.1) TO TUZIGOOT (M.49.5)

- Total River Miles - 24.4
- Elevation Drop - 3,810 to 3,350
- Average Drop - 20 feet per mile
- Class - Class II+ (Please refer to the Cautions section.)
- Topo Maps - Perkinsville, Sycamore Basin, Munds Draw and Clarkdale
- Shuttle Time - Normally the shuttle time will be in the neighborhood of three hours, but this all depends upon the condition of FR 318 up and down from Jerome. If you have to go out to Chino via FR 354 and then through Prescott to the Verde Valley, you can count on a shuttle of over four hours.
- Days Needed - Two and a half to four



~ Looking Down at the Perkinsville Railroad Bridge - Mile 26.5 ~ poses only.

RIVER ACCESS POINTS

~RAPS~

Perkinsville Road Bridge (M. 25.1) - See the previous chapter.

Perkins Ranch Properties (M. 26) - All private access. You must have written permission to access here.

Alvarez Ranch (M. 35.8) - All private access.

Packard Ranch - Sycamore Creek (M. 37.4) - All private access. Any floater access via The Sycamore Canyon Wilderness parking area down the ranch road should be specifically approved by the owners or caretakers.

Sycamore (M. 37.4) to TAPCO (M. 46) - There are numerous access points of varying degrees of negotiability off the Sycamore Road between TAPCO and Sycamore Creek. Some are private and some are very crude, so know where you're going before you plan either a put-in or take-out any place in this ten-mile stretch. They are really best left for emergency pur-

TAPCO (M. 46) - This is easy enough to find. Just look for the old smoke stack rising above the historic Arizona Power Company (hence, TAPCO) plant around M. 46. From the Tuzigoot Road/Sycamore Road junction it is about three miles of improved dirt to TAPCO. The spacious benches of cottonwoods that make up the TAPCO play area are technically on private land, but all manner of foolishness is still tolerated at this time. It is heavily, heavily used during the warmer months.

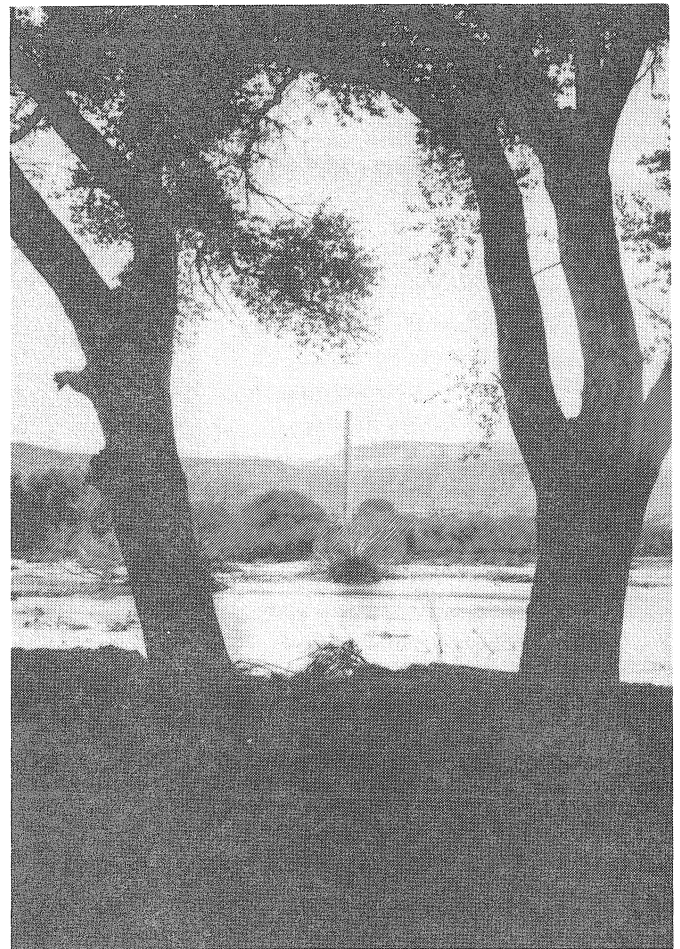
TAPCO is actually the more common take-out for floaters from Perkinsville or Sycamore because of the relative sluggishness of flow and ugliness of scenery that awaits during miles 46 to 49.

Mile 48 - From here on down through the entire Verde Valley, there are scores of potential RAPS. Most are of the private residential variety, so plan any shoreline activities with respect in mind and trouble the home-folks only in cases of need.

Tuzigoot Bridge (M. 49.5) - From Old Town Cottonwood, take Main/Broadway for about two

miles northwest towards Clarkdale. You'll see the Tuzigoot National Monument turnoff on your right. The Verde is less than a half mile down the road. This Tuzigoot road, by the way, is the high water entrance to Dead Horse Ranch State Park — a popular RAP at M. 52.6.

~ Notes ~



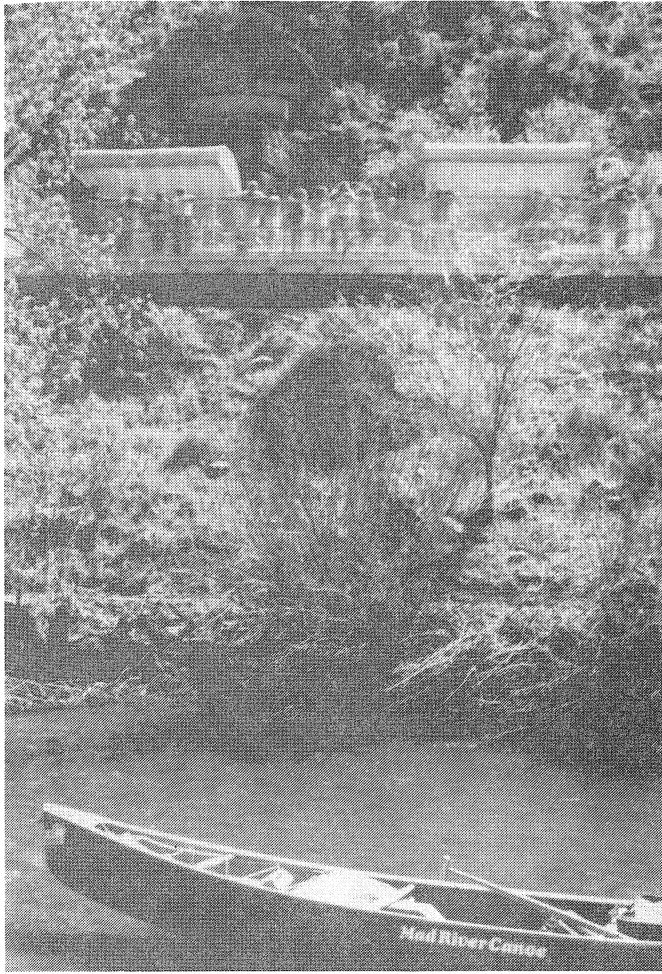
~TAPCO - Mile 46~

**GENERAL
DESCRIPTIONS,
HIGHLIGHTS AND
CAUTIONS**

This stretch could be called "The Train Run" of the Verde because indeed the Central Arizona Railroad is the most dominant unnatural feature. For better than two-thirds of the twenty-five miles, you can't help but notice its presence in these spectacular canyons. Twice a day, at least, you'll likely share the scenery with hundreds of rail passengers as they roll to and from Clarkdale and Perkinsville. They love gawking at floaters.



~ Tuzigoot Ruins as viewed from Mile 50.8 ~



~ Mile 28.0 ~

One's opinion of this railway depends entirely upon perspective I'll try not to railroad mine upon the reader too heavily, but instead try to present a brief historical report about its origins and present day operations.

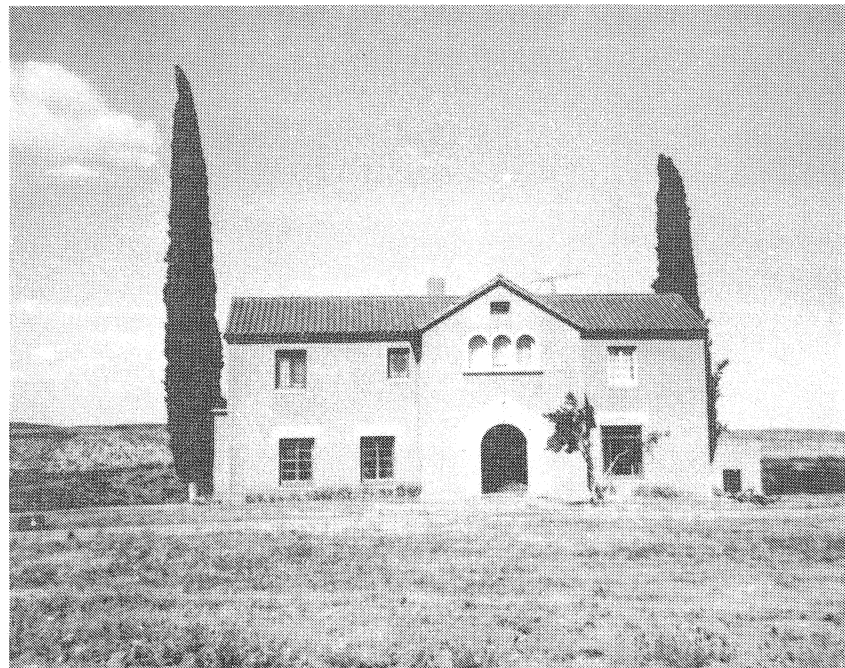
The 38-mile length of standard gauge track from Clarkdale to Drake was built in 1912 to serve the needs of the mining industry in Jerome and Clarkdale. It wasn't the first railway in the Verde Valley. There were other narrow gauge lines that preceded it — such as the United Verde and Pacific, built in the 1880's. The UVP ran a serpentine and hazardous grade from Jerome over Mingus Mountain to the main line Santa Fe near Chino Valley. As copper mining boom times hit around the turn of the century, it became obvious that quicker and more efficient means were needed to get the ore to market.

In 1911-1912, the illustrious and visionary William A. Clark financed the construction of the Verde Valley Railroad that rendered the narrow gauge lines virtually obsolete. The new line allowed increased tonnage to be shipped up to the junction at Drake and also helped secure ample supplies of coal, coke and lime etc., on return runs that would keep the smelters fire and the whole mining operation producing at peak output. Another added benefit of Clark's railroad was that less labor and time were required to switch the products from narrow gauge to standard gauge at the junction points.

Considering the times, it is remarkable that the railway was constructed in one year. Of all of Mr. Clark's accomplishments this was perhaps his greatest. It is a true testament to the incredible effort, ingenuity and willpower that people can put forth — especially with economic gains as the rewards. Look in the river log for two of the most vivid examples of these efforts at SOB Canyon and the tunnel.

The mining industry would experience periods of boom and bust like EKG strips during the World War times, but the trains kept up a steady pace of activity.

By the time the copper market hit rock bottom after the Second World War, and the Clarkdale Smelter closed for good in 1953, this line, having no other use, acquired the name "The Verde Mix," stayed quiet.

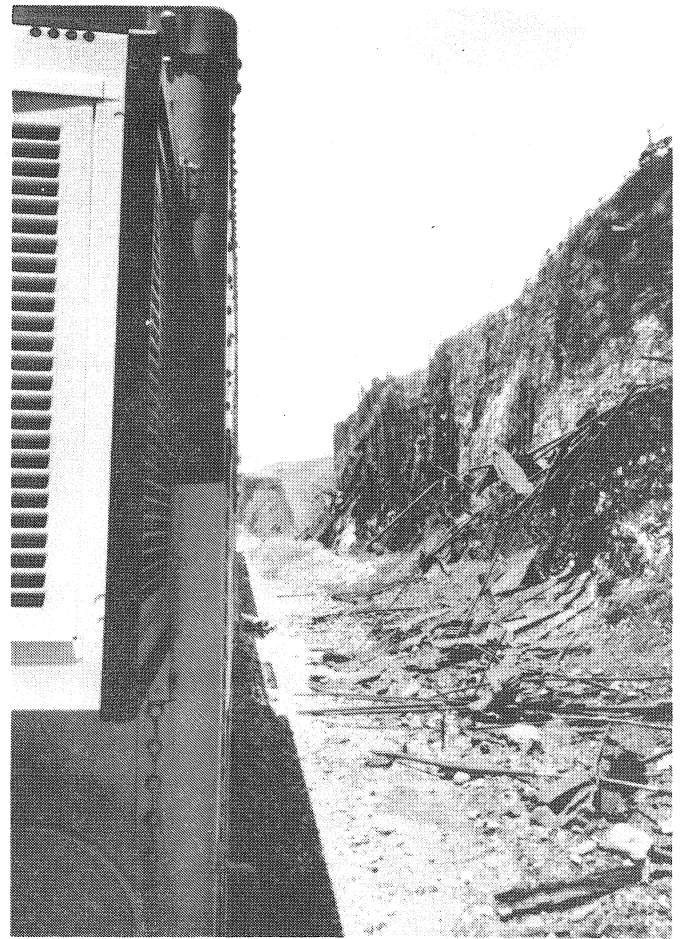


~ William A. Clark's Mansion - near Mile 49.0 ~

profitable because of diversification. More passengers and more general freight helped ease the loss of the copper mining industry. Also, in the early 1950's, the Phoenix Cement Plant began operations in Clarkdale, and the Verde Mix contracted to haul their coal and cement to and from Drake. Trucks, the culprits in the general demise of the entire rail freight industry, now do most of the hauling; but this uniquely successful little train still makes about four freight runs per week.

In 1988, the railway was purchased from Santa Fe Railroad by The Western Group from Utah. In short time, this astute outfit built a business that has become one of the greatest boons to the local economy in four decades. The maiden voyage of the Verde River Canyon Excursion Train was on November 23, 1990. By one year's end, 40,000 people had ridden the train, and now ticket sales will likely top 100,000 per year!

The Western Group discovered yet one more gold mine; but unlike the others in the nearby mountains,



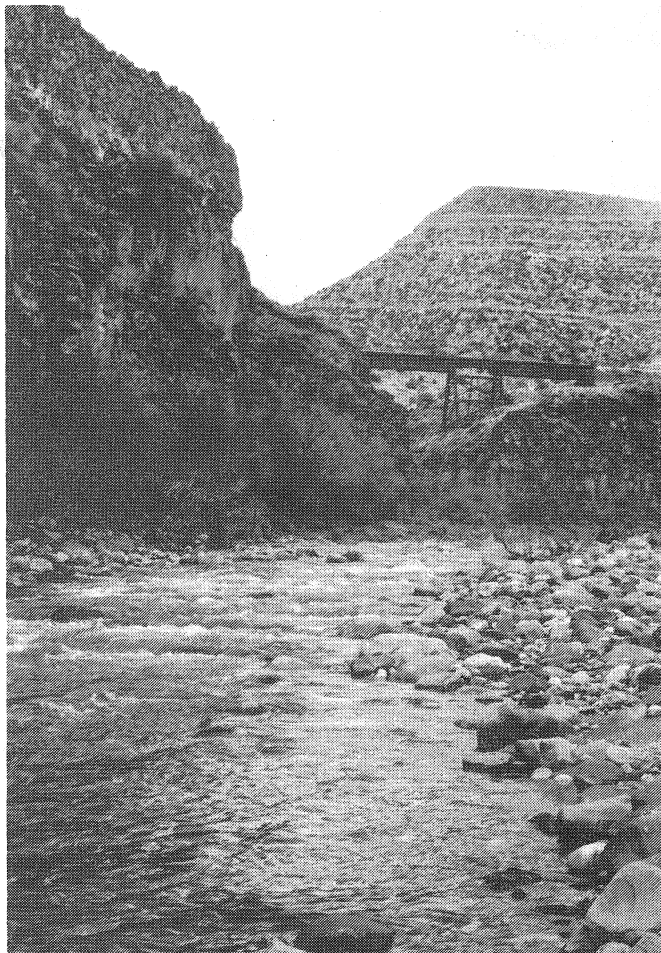
~ Forty-Acre Slag Heap Near Mile 48.0 ~

it's unlikely this one will get played out.

Despite the intrusion of the trains, this stretch is, in my opinion, the most scenic of the Verde's 199 miles. There is just no other place where such sheer formations of sandstone, limestone and basalt so closely border, embrace and envelop the shores of the river. For sheer colorful neck-craning wonderment, this stretch stands unique.

There is a high likelihood that if it weren't for the railway this Perkinsville to Sycamore section (and perhaps the Box Canyon below) would be included in the Federal listings of Wild and Scenic Rivers. The effort failed in its first attempt, but another try is under way.

Wildlife seems to have adapted well, and I would have to agree that the railroad is a far sight better than road roads when it comes to preserving delicate areas from heavy impact. The railroad owners and operators do stress respect for the canyons and their inhabitants. They want to protect their investment as

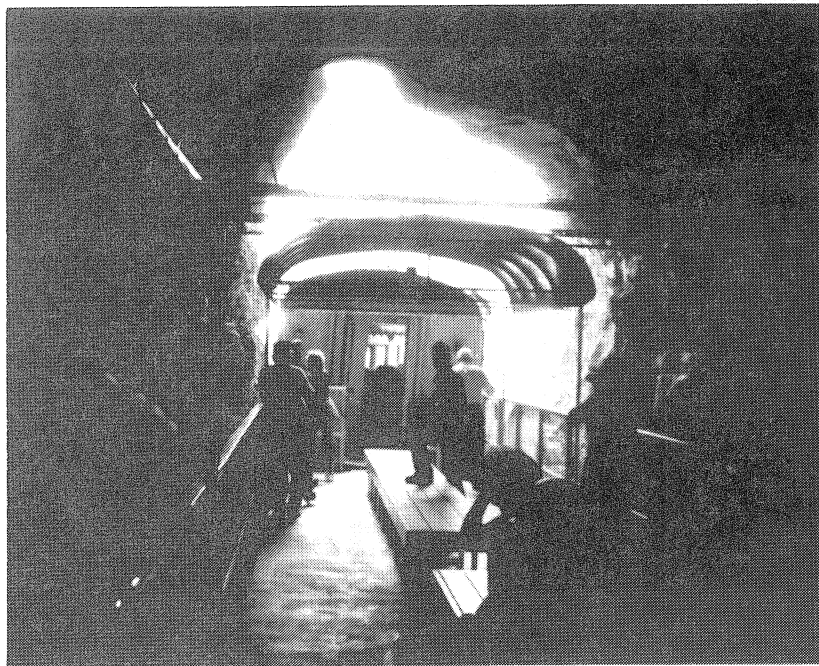


~ Mile 42.7 - SOB Drop and Trestle ~

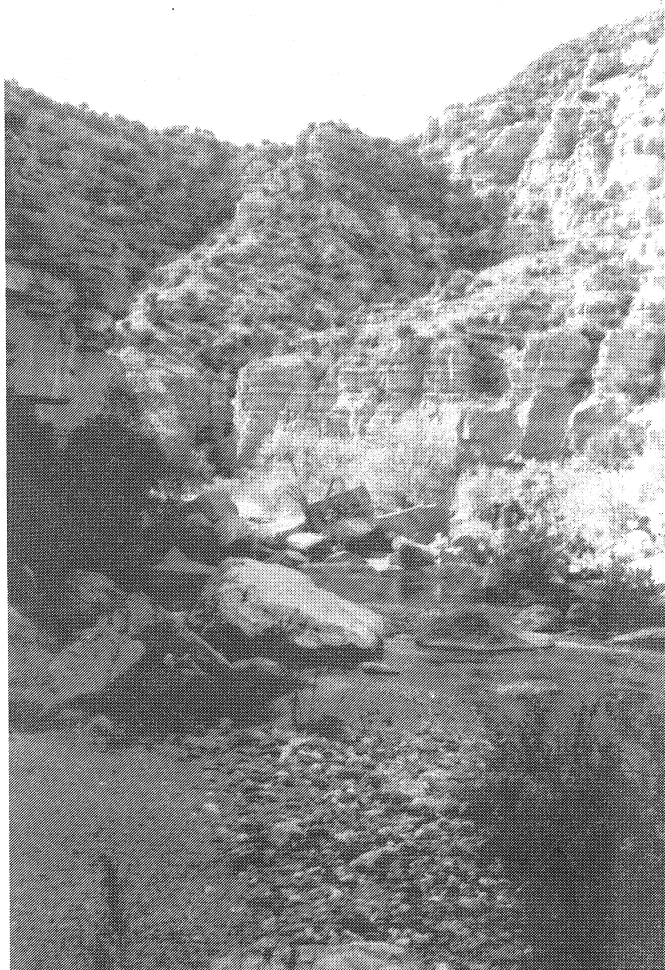
well as our natural heritage. I can't help but be optimistic that if there are any future plans for increased human presence or development along this treasured Verde Canyon, they will be laid with preservation as the top priority.

Now, back to floating

Please take a lot of time checking the flow and researching the conditions before you head down here — even if it means taking a day hike along the tracks just before you plan to put-in. The whitewater classification can change dramatically. During flooding or unusually high flows, the run from Perkinsville to Sycamore will jump to Class III or more and should be attempted only by experienced Verde floaters. The 20+ average per-mile drop, obstructed and tricky rapids, distance from help (despite the train) and



~ Mile 30 - Railroad Tunnel ~



~ Mile 30.3 - Blasted Tunnel Falls ~

~ Notes ~

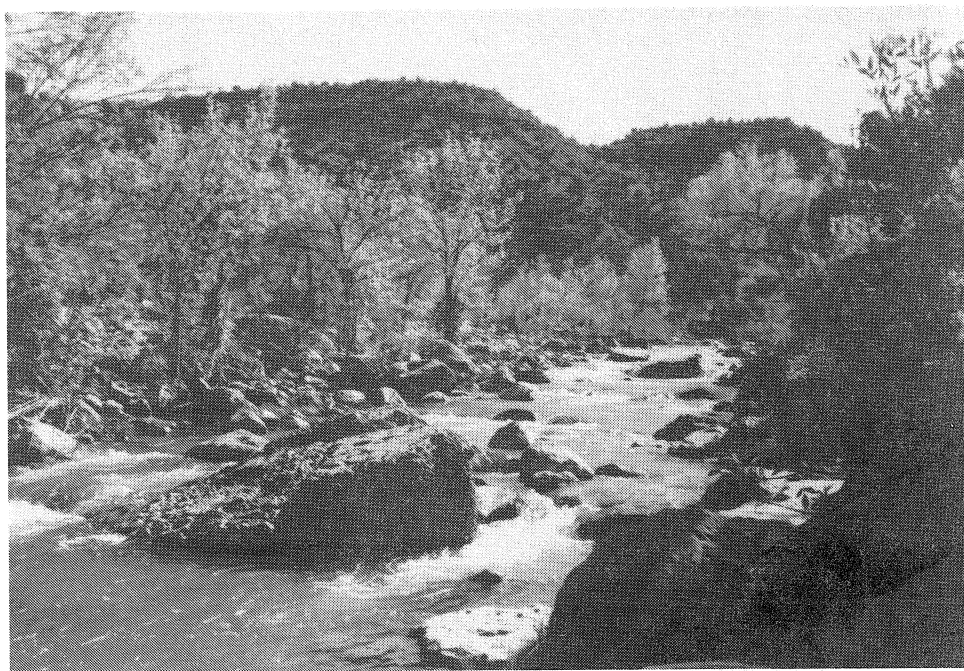
strainers combine to make this run very challenging and hazardous.

Experienced boaters love the song and dance of the constant maneuvers, but beginners likely will find hardship, potential pins and problems with every turn. Come down here well prepared and well schooled in the Verde's ways and you'll have the scenic ride of your life during those rare periods of plentiful flow.

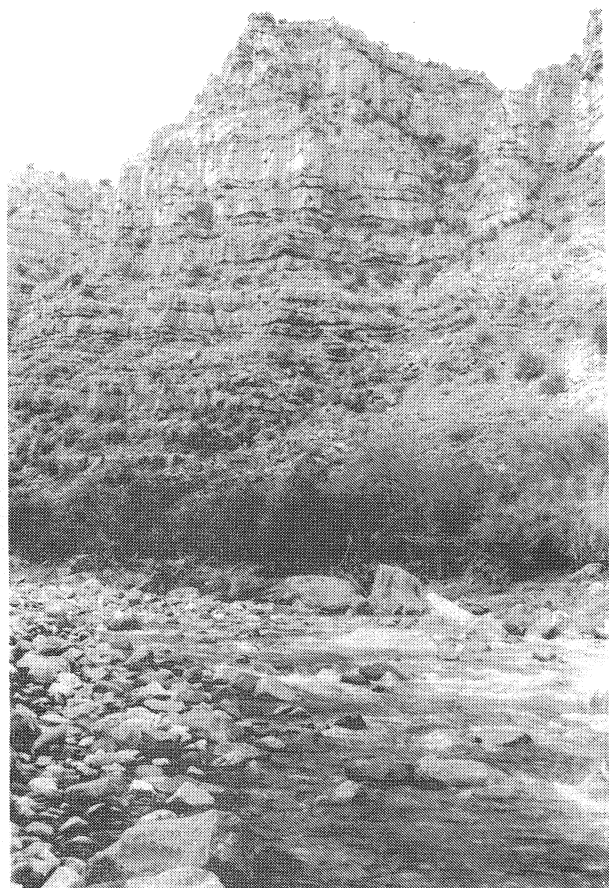
Even during the usual prime-times of late February to early April, this stretch is normally low — Class I+ rock-knocking low! In fact, most floaters eschew it in favor of the more popular runs in and below the Verde Valley where the major rim runoff tribs of Sycamore, Oak Creek, Beaver and Clear Creeks have contributed and provided for a more predictable and full ride.

The flow from Perkinsville to Sycamore is just not predictable, so you must be prepared for whatever. Like the run above Perkinsville, you are advised to take your durable and battle-worn gear during all but high flow times. Furthermore, numerous drops will require you to count on your experience and exercise the low water cautions covered in the last chapter.

Take your time during this run and please don't count on covering too many miles in a day! I speak from experience.



~ Mile 29.7 - The Old "Horseshoe Drop" ~



~ Mile 32.6 ~

During my first run through here from Morgan Ranch, I made the mistake of leaving too many miles to paddle and pole on my final day. I had to get from mile 33 to TAPCO (mile 46) by mid-afternoon in order to meet my shuttle schedule. It was a torturous and exhausting day that allowed me little time to appreciate the surroundings.

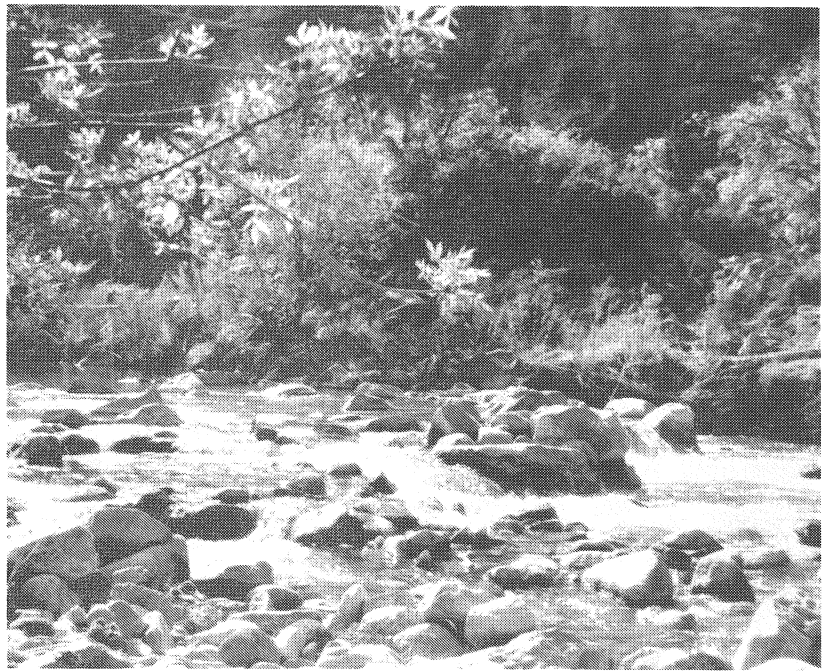
Since then, I have never tried to paddle more than ten miles a day, and I have usually arranged trips that are more in the seven or eight miles per day range. There is just too much to do and see down here to allow rocky drops and drag-throughs to get you down during a hurried day.

These canyons are prime bald eagle habitat. The best months for viewing coincide with those for floating. I've heard that there are between two and five pairs that make the Verde Canyon their home. What a rare thrill it is to watch the young eagles yapping and flapping to and from as they practice their skills of work and play.

There were great concerns in 1990 that the increased train traffic and human presence would adversely effect the eagles and make the canyons less attractive for new breeding pairs. The concerns have not been completely laid to rest, but it does seem that the eagles are prospering. Their needs for secure nests upon cliff sides or trees and ample fish supplies perhaps have taken priority over living in a quiet neighborhood? Time will tell.

Down here, you'll also likely see the Verde guardian Great Blue Herons; the noisy and territorial Kingfishers; the guide bird Mergansers, who frequently precede you down the river in the anxious game of "I'll fly and you catch up"; and many more avian friends.

Larger animals such as deer, javelina, fox, coyote, mountain lion, beaver, racoons, otter and perhaps a

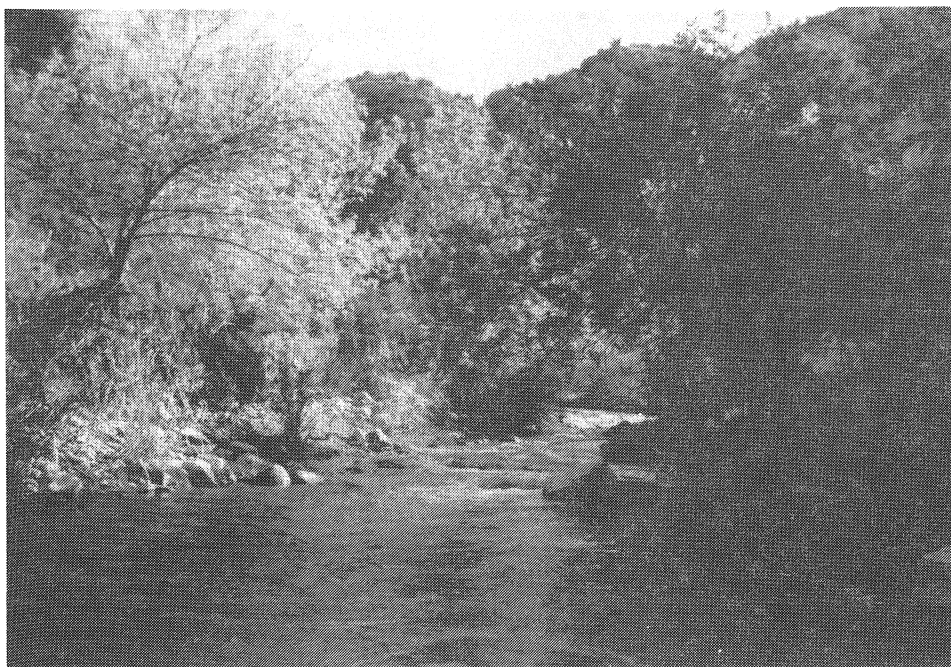


~ Mile 30.1 ~

rare bear from the Sycamore region are sighted occasionally along this stretch. Be especially watchful during the early and late hours for your best chances of spotting the canyon's residents.

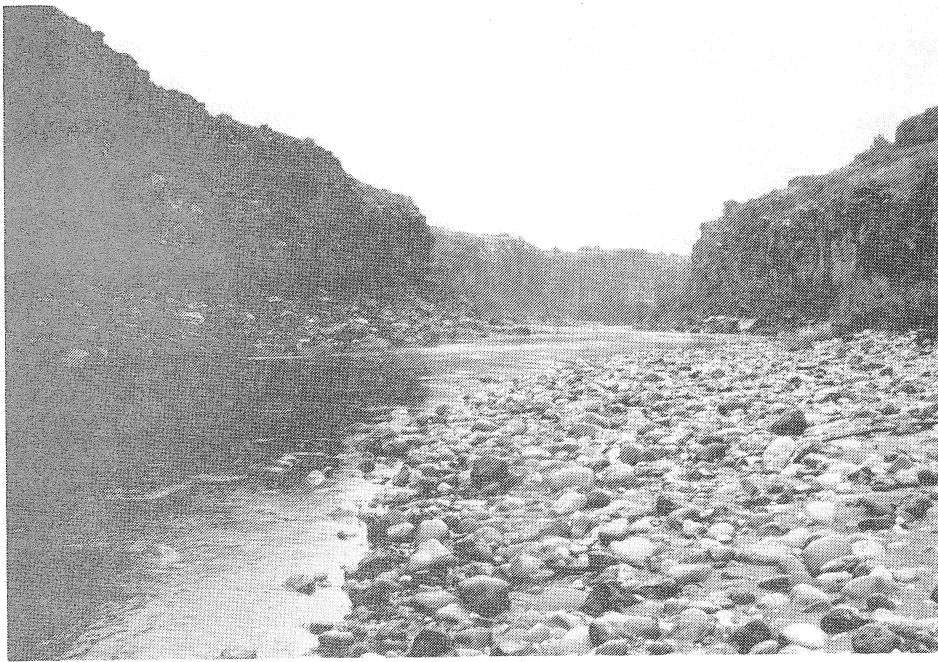
Stories tell that somewhere around M. 30 a lost gold mine is awaiting some lucky explorer. The legend of the Sierra Azul dates to the 1760's, and it has been a source of speculation and allure ever since. Reportedly, a group of Apaches were the first to come

upon the rich and pure gold vein. Wandering Spaniards on their appointed task of seeking riches in the New World encountered the Apaches and temporarily seized the mine. The Apaches would not relent and bloodshed prevailed. In the end, only two Spaniards survived, and they hightailed it south with no booty but with plenty of stories that perhaps have grown bigger with time. In 1767, King Charles of Spain put a stop to all further exploits in the New World, and the natives, who possessed a lesser lust for material wealth, evidently let it be.



~ Mile 31.0 ~

RIVER MILE LOG



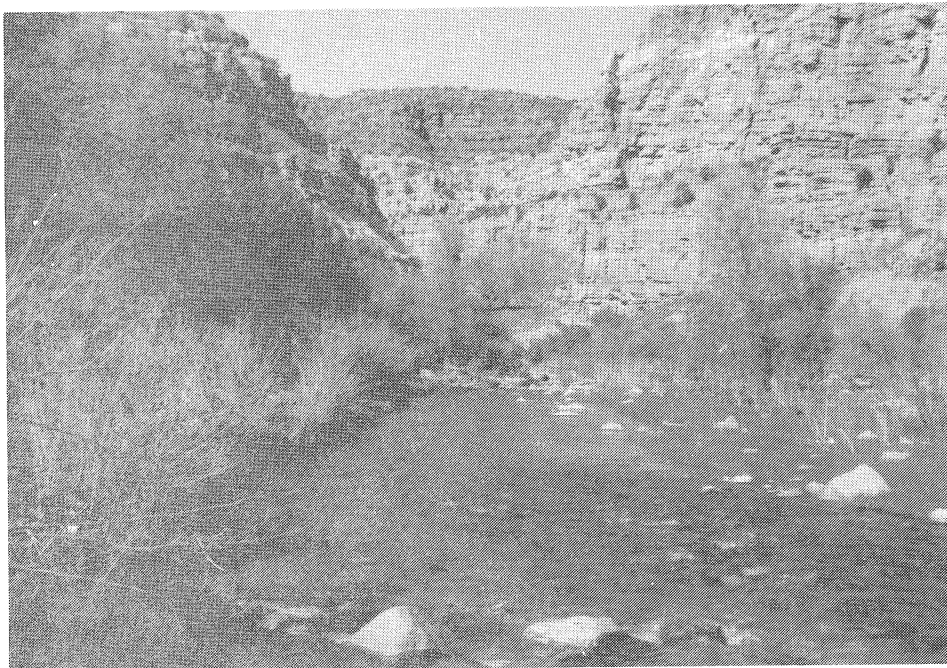
~ Mile 41.0 ~

If you've a lust for legends of this nature, put a geiger counter in your gear and see if you can add to the stories of the Sierra Azul Yet another reason to stay awhile in these magnificent and magnetic reaches of the Upper Verde.

dangerous encounters with the debris and undercut banks.

The grove of cottonwoods on the right hosts a community of great blue herons. It is one of the most densely populated rookeries of the entire Verde. Due north of here is the Perkins Ranch and Perkinsville Depot and southeast is the P6 Ranch (so named for Mr. and Mrs. Nick Perkins and their four boys). More

than once I've seen the owners on both shores admonishing intruders for ignoring their posted signs. Floaters should stay with their boats until well past the rail bridge.



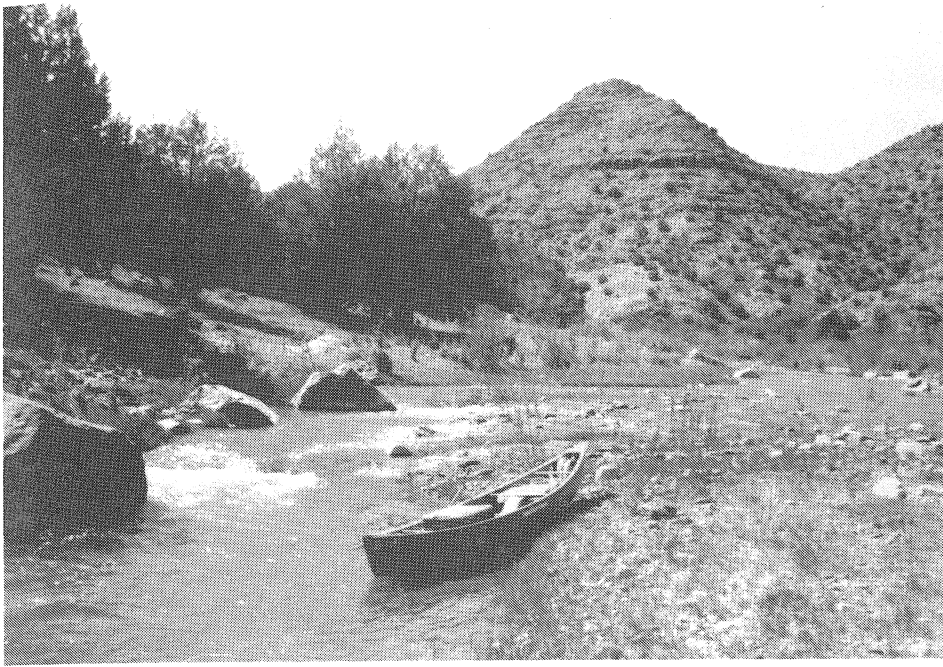
~ Mile 29.6 ~

Mile 25.1 - Elevation 3,810 - Perkinsville RAP - Your first mile will be low and sluggish as the river braids through the flats. The original Perkins Ranch homestead is on the high ground on the right bank near M. 25.6. One of the largest of the Upper Verde beaver lodges was located near the left bank at this spot before the floods of '93. Look for them making their return?

Mile 26.0 - Elevation 3,800 - Be careful here because of the strainers and fences at M. 26.0 and 26.2. If you must, walk the inside of bends to avoid any deceptively

Mile 26.5 - Orchard Draw enters from the right, and it has created a long low riffle that terminates into a deep pool at the base of the wall just up from the trestle. Orchard Draw was named by the Perkins because of their once bountiful fruit orchards in the vicinity.

Mile 27.0 - Elevation 3,780 - Mile 27 is the gateway into the depths of the "Train Run." You'll notice how the canyon steadily begins to



~ Looking upstream from Mile 27.0 ~

narrow and small riffles become more common as the Verde starts to double its cut into its twenty-foot-per-mile descent. I always love the anticipation that comes with paddling into the gateway to the depths.

Mile 28.0 - Elevation 3,760 - Right on this mark, you'll hit a rock-dodger very characteristic of what you'll run during the next ten miles. If you've gotten a late start from Perkinsville, you'll find ample scenic spots to camp on the right shore.

Near here, two Mexican men attempted to homestead and raise vegetables and rotgut in the early 1900's. Floods forced them to head upriver where they hired on with the high ground Perkins family. I've not found any remnants of their small quarters, but they are reported to "still" be here.

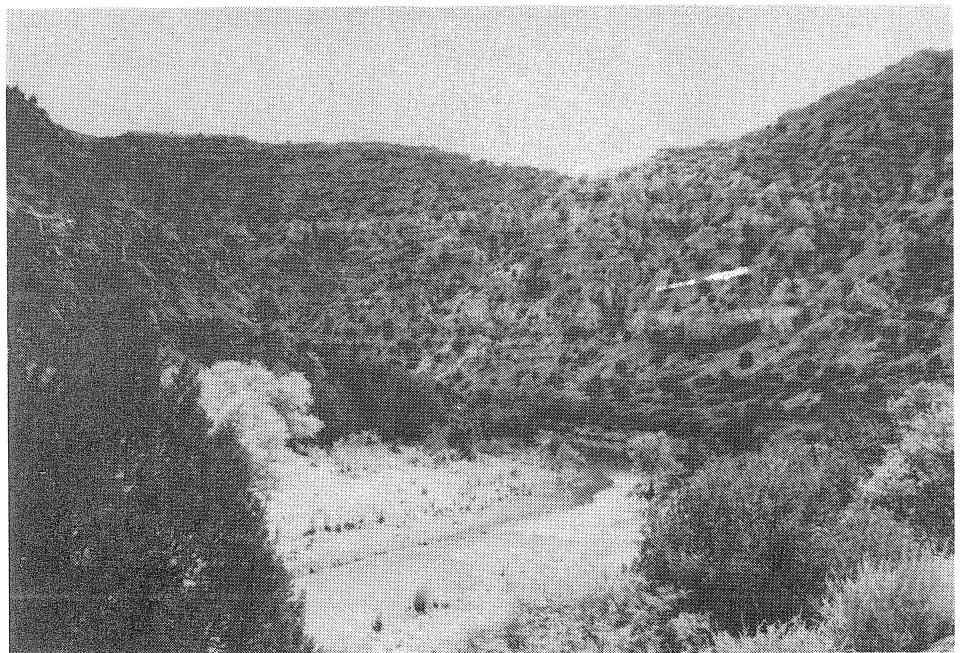
Most of Mile 28 is rather low, requiring you to pole as well as paddle. There are a couple of small riffles as the river turns at M. 28.7, but you'll have to await most of the Verde's frolicking drop until you reach the mid-section of Mile 29.

Mile 29.0 - Elevation 3,750 - Just below the railroad tourist event site on your right at M. 29.3, you are cautioned to watch for strainers. As floods come and go, one never knows exactly where trouble spots like this may lurk. As always, be watchful near every suspicious twist in the channel.

Red Flat Draw and Horseshoe Canyon appear on the right where the Verde makes a severe northern turn at Miles 29.5 and 29.6. Tracklayers and tunnel drillers made temporary camps around here in 1911, so it may be a place worth your time to explore. A walk up to the trestle over Horseshoe will give you great

views and camera angles.

Just below the entrance of Horseshoe Canyon, you'll run a significant drop. Before 1993, "Horseshoe Drop" ran far left and gave floaters a long and steady descent of fun boulder games. But now, the main channel has veered far right and it is a confused mess of flood debris. It appears, though one never knows, that most of the flow will continue to cut right on its



~ From the railbed looking down to the depths at Mile 28.0 ~

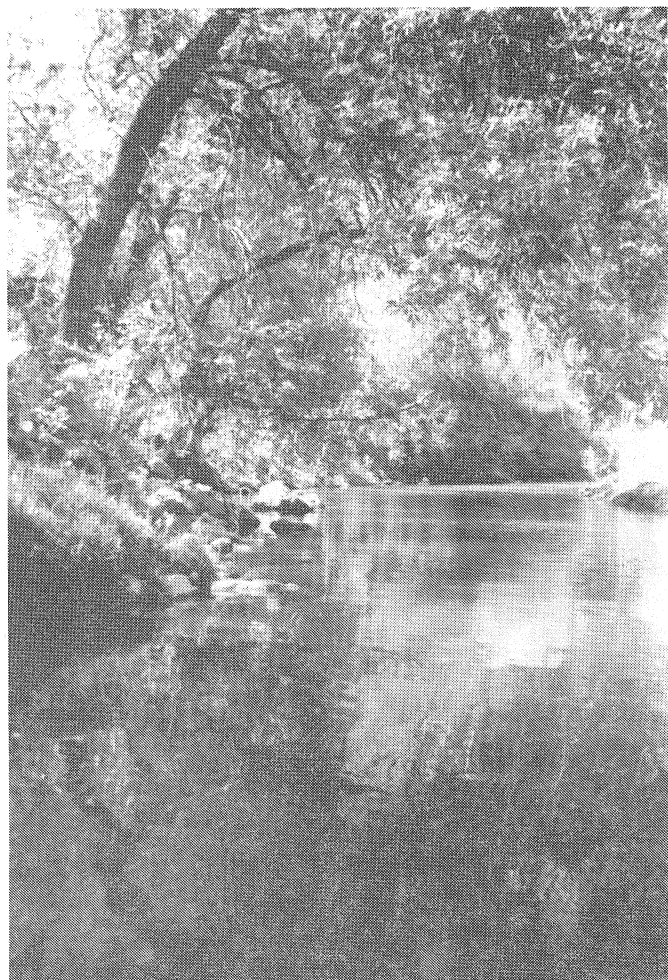
the 600-foot rail tunnel was bored and blasted by twenty or so workers during a six-month nocturne in 1911-1912 — an incredible accomplishment of the times!

Now, your greatest accomplishment of this run will be to safely negotiate the falls. In high flow this area can be more highly rated and challenging than the notorious Verde Falls at Mile 91. Walk it on the left if you are at all unsure.

During normal to low flows, there is no way to run it free and clear. The unnatural conglomeration of boulders is a problem of pins and poor footing waiting to happen. Again, walking it on the left is your safest choice.

If you are solo or lightly loaded, and you don't mind subjecting your boat to some abrasive abuse, you can save the portage by manhandling your gear through the slots until you reach the base of the falls. It is an option, but because of the tricky footing and deep spots around the boulders, it is not an option I'd recommend.

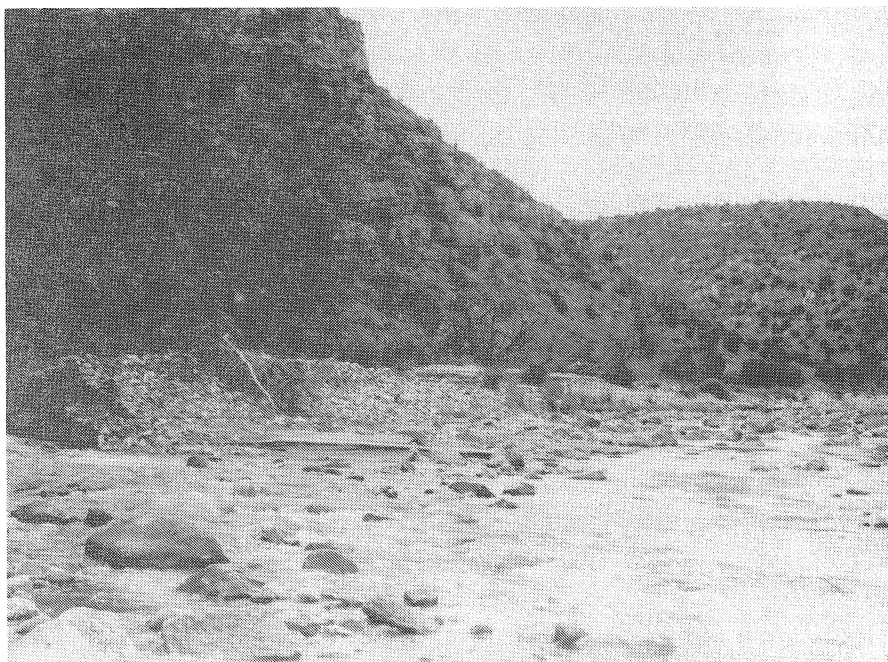
Mile 30.3 - Once you've walked, run or scrambled the Tunnel Falls, you'll have only a small pool to paddle before the next debris-dodging affair at the downriver



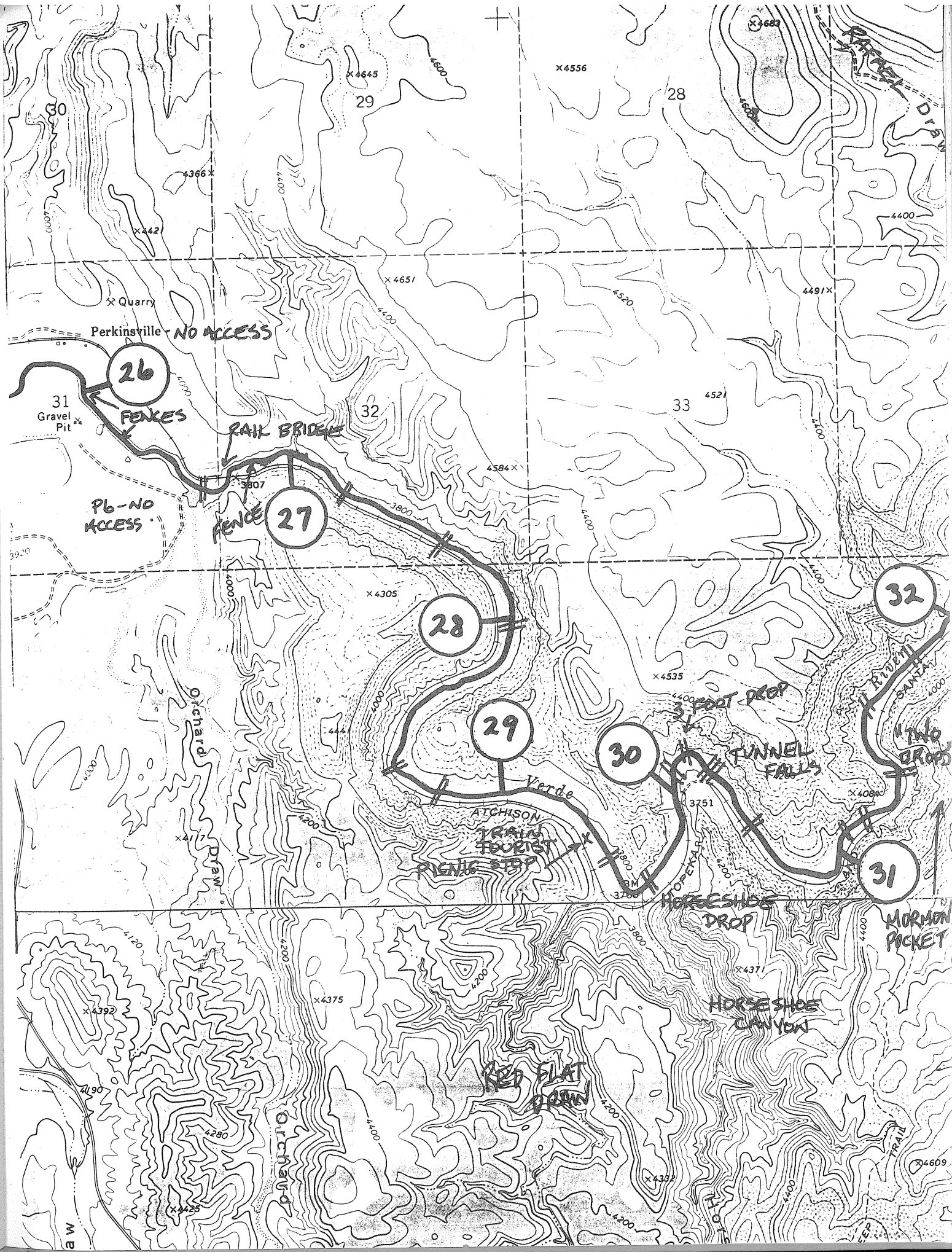
~ Lovely canopy near Mile 28.5 ~

new path to the outside — leaving the old drop as a relatively dry memory. The two channels merge at the tip of the island at Mile 29.9. Horseshoe Drops is a fascinating place. (UPDATE '94: This drop has returned to its left channel.)

Mile 30.0 - Elevation 3,730 - Here's the beginning of the "Tunnel Drops" area. In the next mile, the Verde will make its steepest descent of this river section. A small rock garden just after Mile 30.0 and then an abrupt three foot drop at Mile 30.1 start the downward trend. Immediately after you plunge these drops, you'll want to park on the right and scramble around to decide how to pass the dangerous obstructions at Mile 30.2. These boulder droppings were deposited when



~ Mile 29.9 - Looking upriver at "Horseshoe Drops" after complete rearrangement in '93. New is on picture left and the old on the right.



26

27

28

29

30

32

31

Perkinsville NO ACCESS

P6-NO ACCESS

RAIL BRIDGE

FENCES

FOOT DROP

TUNNEL FALLS

HORSESHOE DROP

RED FLAT DRAW

MORMON POCKET

RAILROAD DRAW

Orchard Draw

Verde

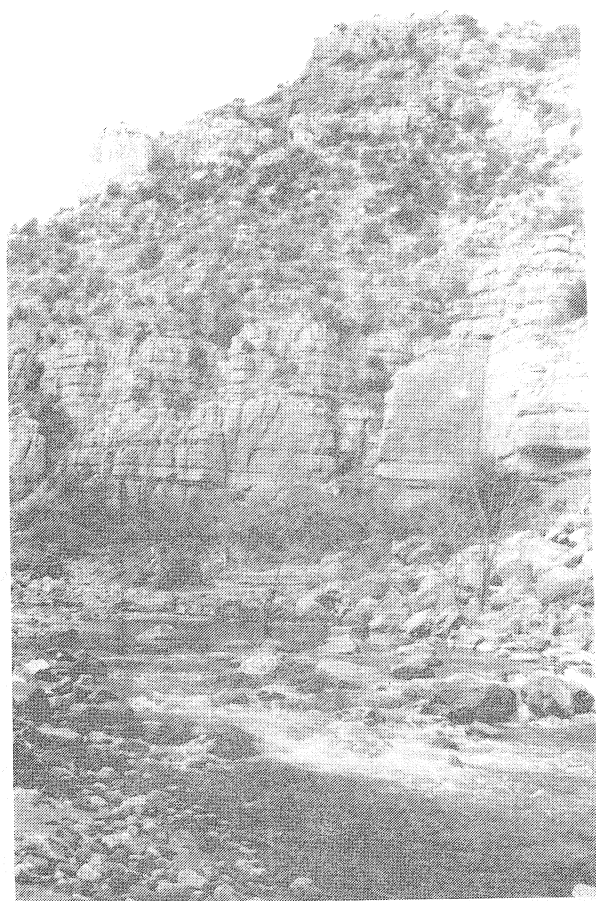
ATCHISON TRAIN TOURIST PICNIC STOP

HOPKINSON

HORSESHOE CANYON

TRAIL

aw



~ Mile 30.1 ~

opening of the tunnel at Mile 30.3. After that, you'll run a small chute and then a hodgepodge flats just before the sharp left turn.

Mile 31.0 - Elevation 3,690 - Just prior to Mile 31.0, you may notice split channels and relatively small rapids. The older right channel possesses most of the water, so it typically is the path of choice. Be wary in here because there are a couple of small but abrupt drops. The channels merge with a riffle at Mile 31.1.

Mile 31.4 - "Tricky Two Drops" - At this point where the river veers sharply left, floaters should be watchful for the big boulders, narrow three-foot drops and currents that can carom your boat. There is a pin prospect here, especially if

you are forced far right.

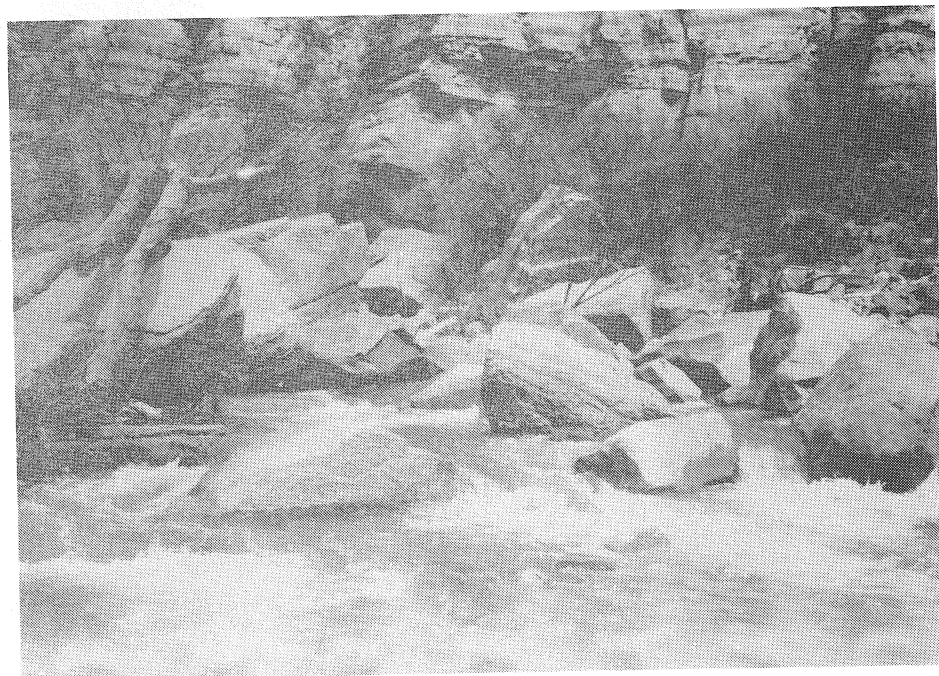
Soon after the "Tricky Twos," you may notice the "Game Refuge" sign on the left. Although I've no knowledge of the current status of this area so posted, such a signature is reassuring none the less.

Small riffles dot the river for a while until you hit one more significant boulder crop at Mile 31.8.

Mile 32.0 - Elevation 3,670 - Rafael Draw enters from the left soon after Mile 32.0. Low flow floaters will embark on a seemingly endless and tiring pinball through "Rafael's Gauntlet."

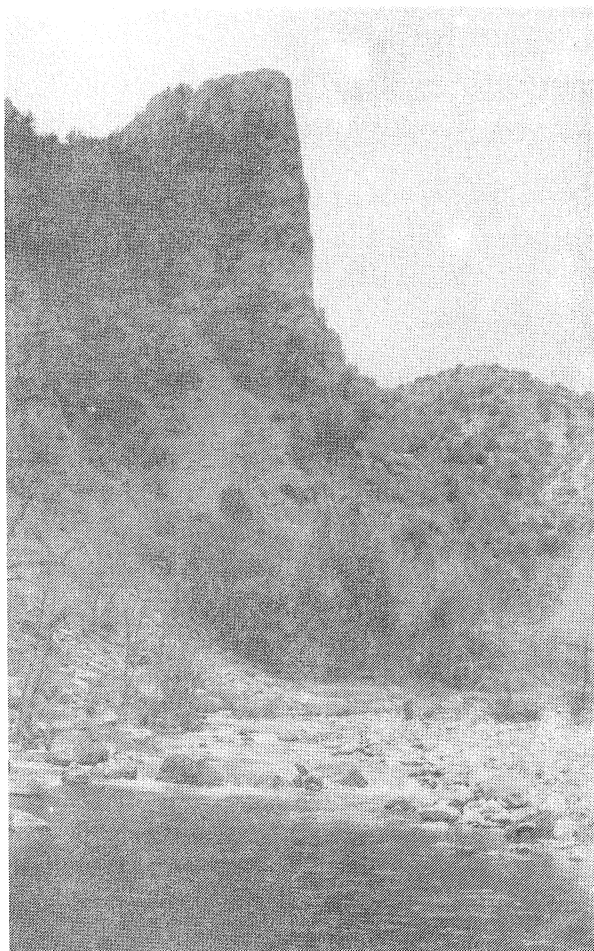
The Gauntlet begins with a small typical riffle at M. 32.1, and then you encounter more knocking in the vicinity of an old ford and a once-inhabited cave on the left at M. 32.2. A respite can be found at the beautiful "Big Springs" on the left at M. 32.3. I've seen these springs spill into the Verde at all times of the year, making it an ideal little break spot. Soon after the springs, you'll hit more and more slow going, bump and grinds, and likely walk-throughs during the remainder of Rafael's Gauntlet.

Mile 32.8 - "Jumbler Drop" - This is the heart of Mormon Pocket. Mormon settlers were common in these parts, so it is likely that early map makers borrowed from their line in naming this loveliest of



~ Tunnel Falls - Mile 30.2 ~

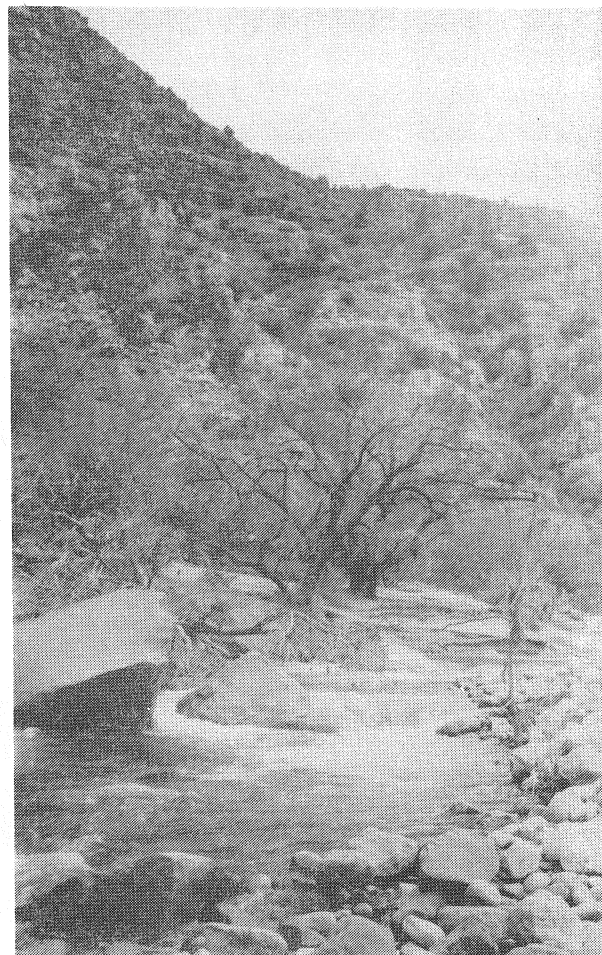
~ Notes ~



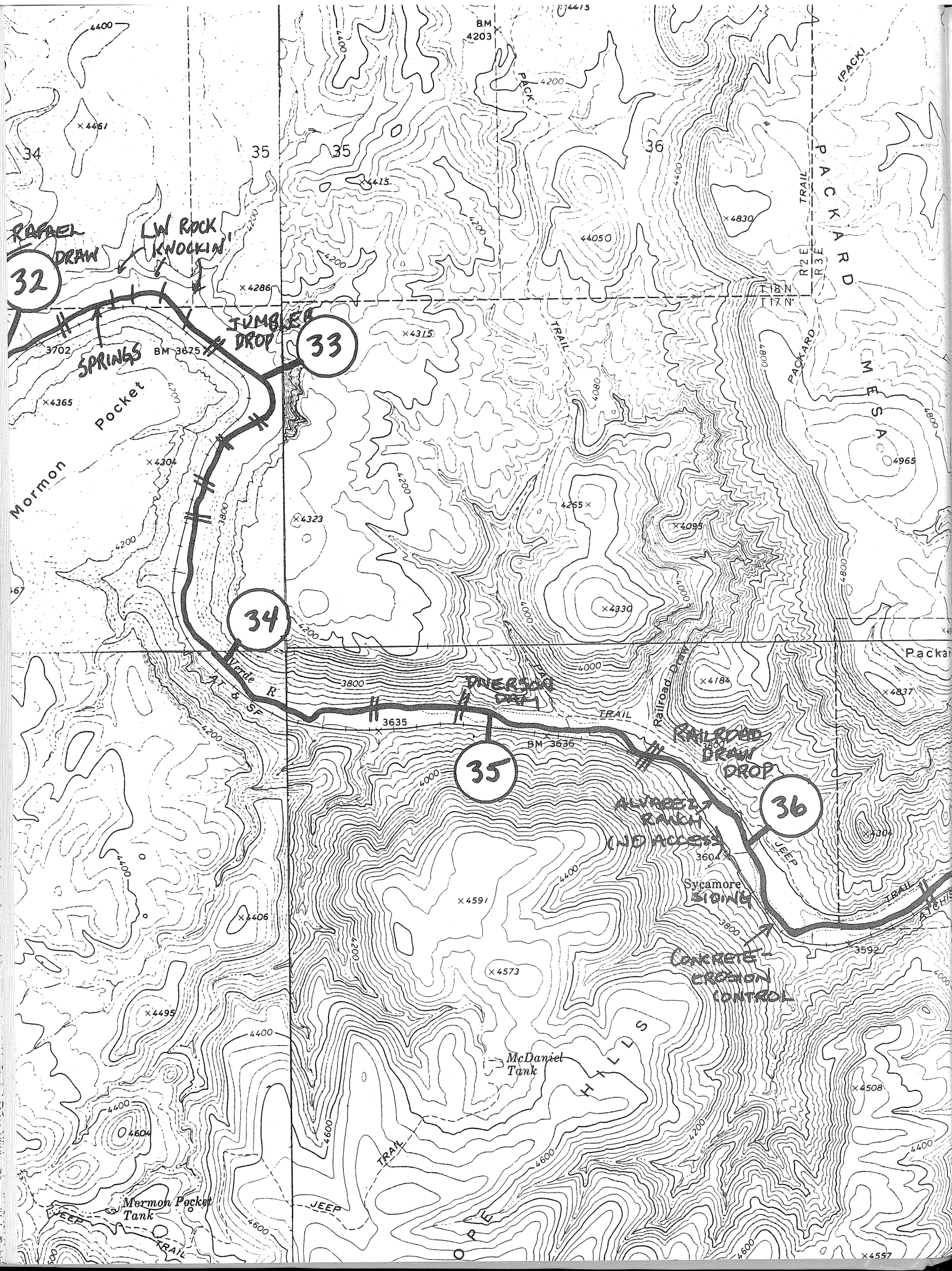
~ Mile 31.0 ~

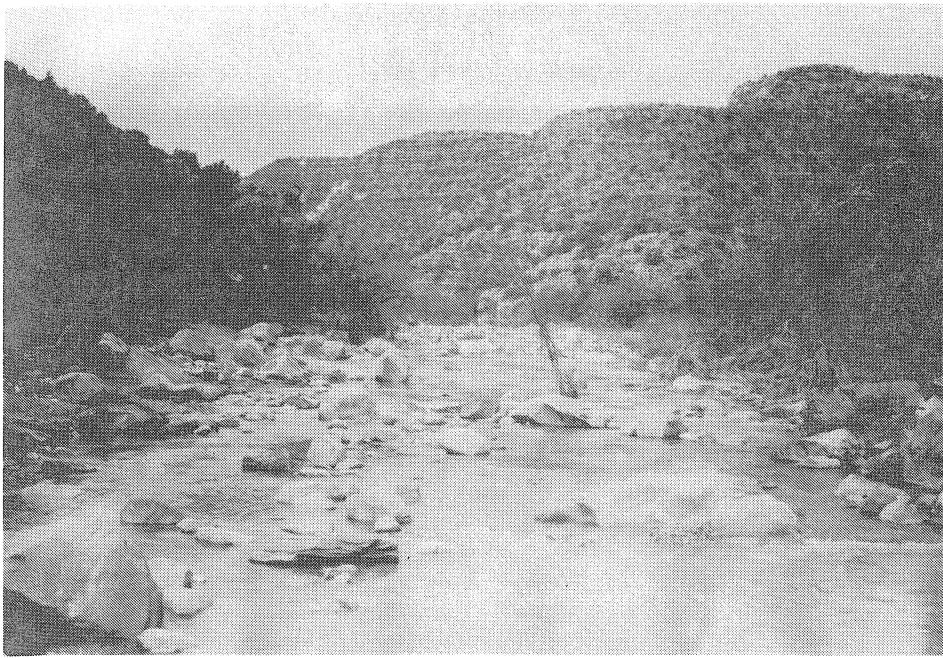
regions. As mentioned earlier, this river run beckons you to take your time, and it is here where you really understand why! I've been lucky enough to camp around Mile 33 a couple of times and have been treated to some of my finer times anywhere on any river. The Pocket is natural enjoyment and magnificence at its best.

Mile 33.0 - Elevation 3,640 - You are finished picking away at the thirty-foot drop of the last laborious mile and can look forward to relatively clear sailing during the next half mile. If you camped just up from here, you may find Mile 33 as a memorable waker-upper. After a small drop at the right turn at M. 33.1, you'll head into a southerly straightaway chute that provides a steady descent and chances for delightful maneuvers even during lower flows. It is a nice spot to savor before the remainder of Mile 33 where the river widens, requiring you to again change from paddling to poling.



~ "Tricky Two Drops" - Mile 31.4 ~





~ Mile 32.5 - "Rafael's Gauntlet"

Mile 34.0 - Elevation 3,620 - At M. 34, the river bends wide left and you'll see the Pocket beginning to open up. The formations of Redwall start to give way to more breaks that will eventually make it succumb altogether around the entrance of Sycamore at M. 37.4.

Burned trees from some unknown cause stand eerily upon the left bank just down from M. 34. Look closely and you may see the remains of an adobe abode on the left near M. 34.4. Perhaps *this* was the site mentioned on page 33.

Mile 34.6 - Here is a nifty chute with rocks, trees and merging meanders. Below this drop, the Verde pools behind the Alvarez Ranch diversion dam. It is a low level, rock-only dam that is non-threatening to floaters — unlike those found in the Verde Valley. The floods of '93 completely washed away any evidence of this dam, but I suspect it will soon reappear.

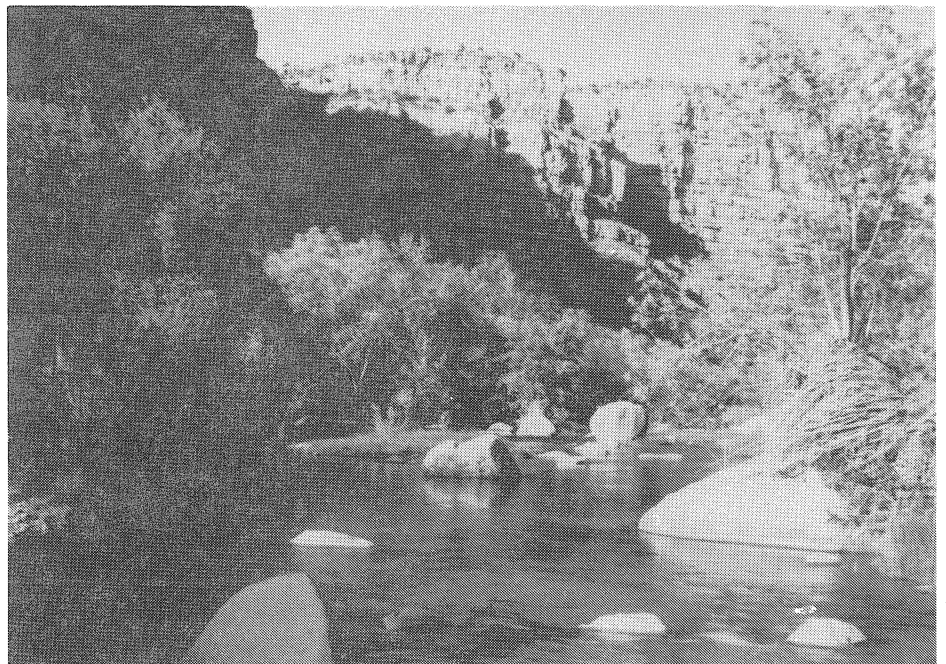
Mile 35.0 - Elevation 3,610 - Relatively clear going can be expected until you reach the entrance of Railroad Draw at Mile

35.5. The topos show this draw as a steep-walled narrow drainage that I look forward to hiking sometime. The combined flood deposits from the draw and the rock falls from the oh-so-close railroad bed have created a very noteworthy drop. In fact, I'd guess that over half of the thirty-foot drop of this mile is found here at "Railroad Draw Drop."

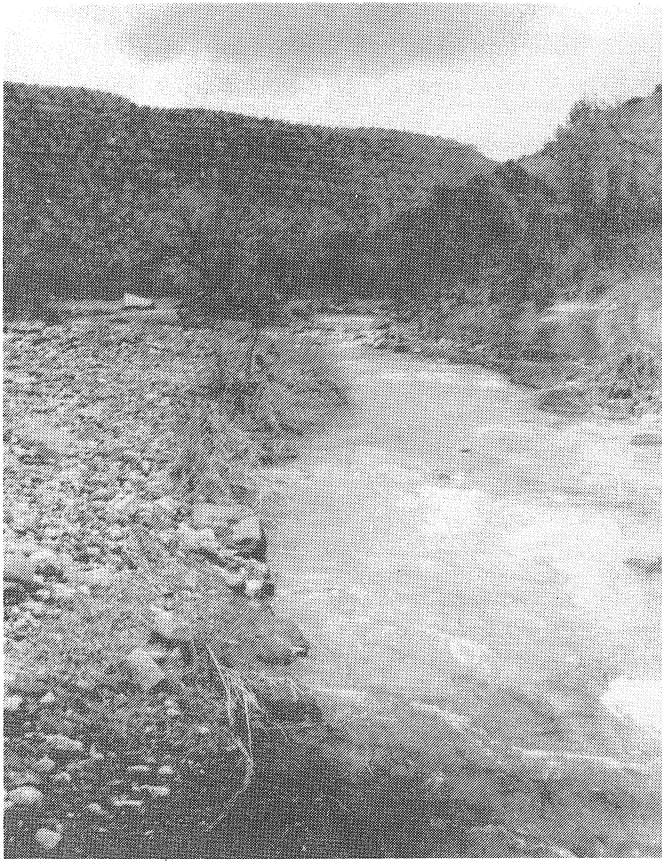
In elevated flows it can be a rock and hole-filled mess with many possible problems for inexperienced boaters. A scout is mandatory. During regular flows, you may have to walk it or try to pinball your way

through the meager openings in the middle part of the drop. Going light, you may be able to stay in your boat all the way to the bottom, but don't count on it. Be careful in pushy flow at the abrupt left turn mid-way down to avoid an encounter with the wall.

Mile 35.8 - The Alvarez Ranch has been in operation since the early 1900's. The original homes are visible on the left. It is a quaint and historically rich homestead quite unlike any other you'll see upon this river.



~ Mile 32.8 - The Heart of the Pocket ~
37



~ Mile 34.6 ~

During my first trip through here, I felt very foreign for having innocently intruded on a large family gathering replete with several generations. On all subsequent trips, I've seen far fewer people just minding to their simple chores of daily life upon their private shore.

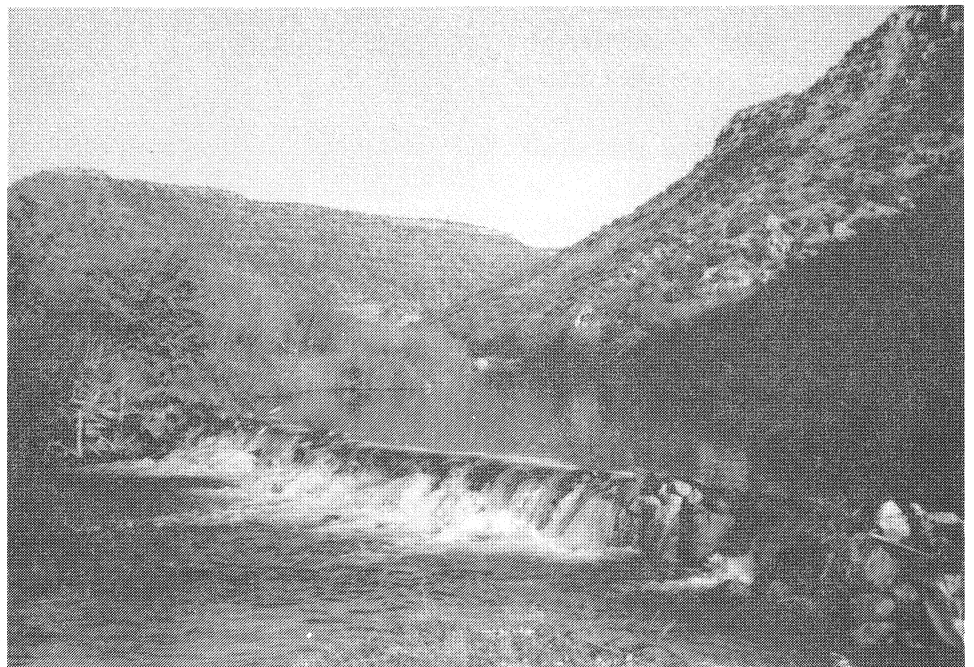
Near the ranch, floaters should be aware of possible water gaps and/or electric fences. Below the ranch, you'll run a couple of low level riffles at M. 35.9 and 36.

Mile 36.0 - Elevation 3,580 - Just up on your right is the only railroad siding between the Clarkdale Depot and Perkinsville. In the Verde Mix days it was an occasional stop for residents and visitors. Now Sycamore Siding is used primarily as a detour for rail maintenance crews awaiting the passing of freight or tourist trains.

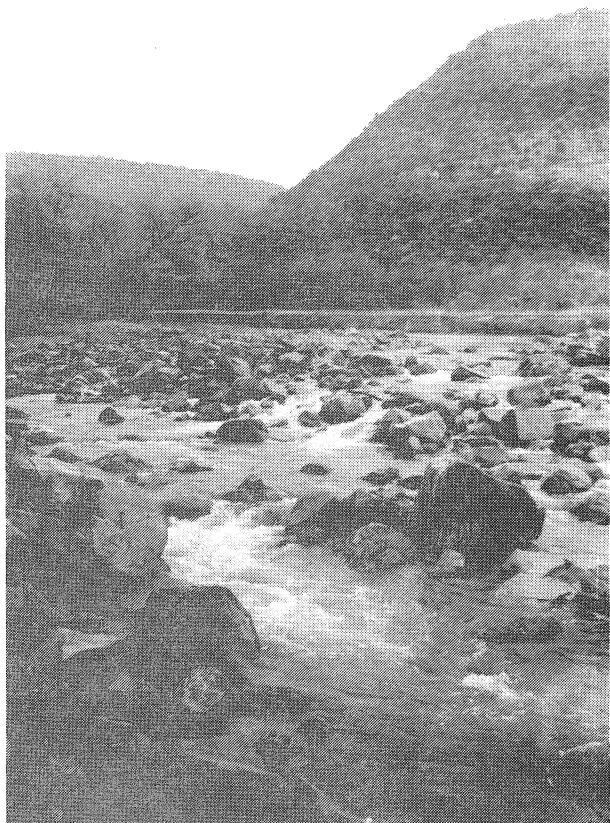
Mile 36.4 - The river turns sharply left and you'll see concrete erosion control slabs to prevent the undermining of the railroad bed. Small chutes and riffles may be run here and around M. 36.7.

Mile 37.0 - Elevation 3,560 - Again, watch for possible fences, electric strands and water gaps. You are nearing more occupied lands. Just below M. 37, you'll see a splendid house perched on your left. It sets near the site of the Gold Tooth Mine. The mine was so named because even after mighty efforts, it failed to show enough color to make a gold tooth! Below this private residence, you'll run a small drop — the last before the entrance of Sycamore Creek.

Mile 37.4 - At last count there were about ten Sycamore Creeks in Arizona, and four of them are in the Verde Watershed. The first and most magnificent of the slew enters here at Mile 37.4. Sycamore originates off the rim over twenty miles north between Williams and Flagstaff. The entire drainage accumulates so much water, especially during bountiful Spring thaws, that it can double or more the flow of the Verde — dearly replenishing the river with relatively clearer and cooler waters. The ranchers and residents have only one way in and out, and that is across the ford less than a quarter mile up the creek. They commonly have to leave vehicles on either side of Sycamore and use a hand pulley trolley during heavy run-off periods.



~ Mile 34.9 - Diversion Dam - Pre '93 ~



~ Mile 35.5 - "Railroad Draw Drop" ~

Sycamore Canyon was among the first Arizona regions to be declared a "Primitive Area" by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1935. In 1972, the 56,000 acres became known as the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness, and that status added more legislative clout to its future protection. The Forest Service is the managing entity of the Wilderness and all hikers should consult with them about current restrictions before embarking on a trip. Verde floaters who wish to meander on foot up Sycamore a ways should know that both shores of the creek are privately owned for about a half mile up to the Wilderness.

The Sycamore-Verde confluence used to be (and, in time, will be again) a lush picture postcard sort of spot. In a flash, it all changed! The fury of February, 1993, completely altered the riverbed and devastated the greenery making it hardly recognizable as the same place.

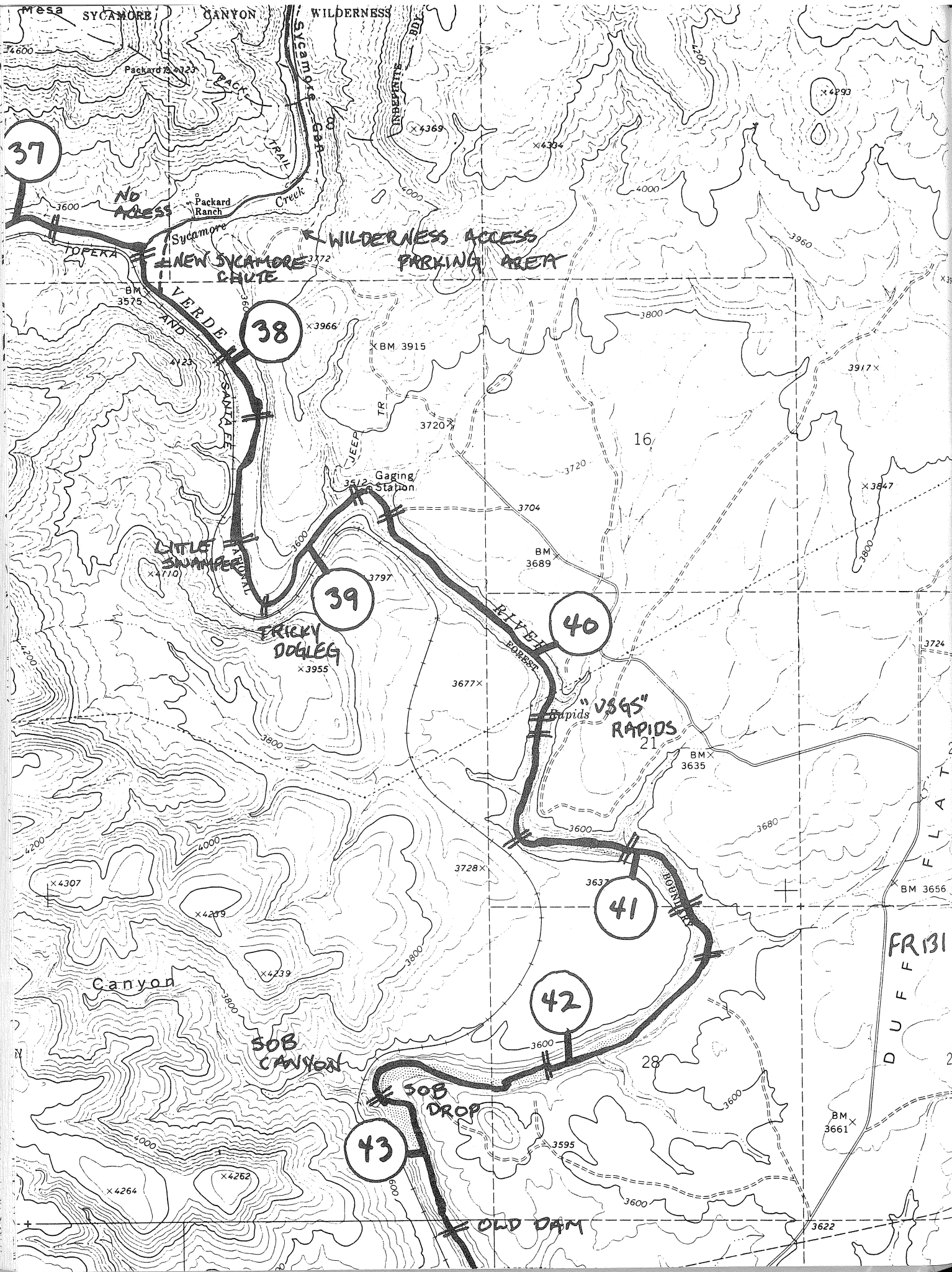
Floaters used to run a playful and wavy chute on the far right just down from the confluence. This Sycamore Chute is now a dry memory. An expansive sand bar has been created on the right which has

~ Notes ~

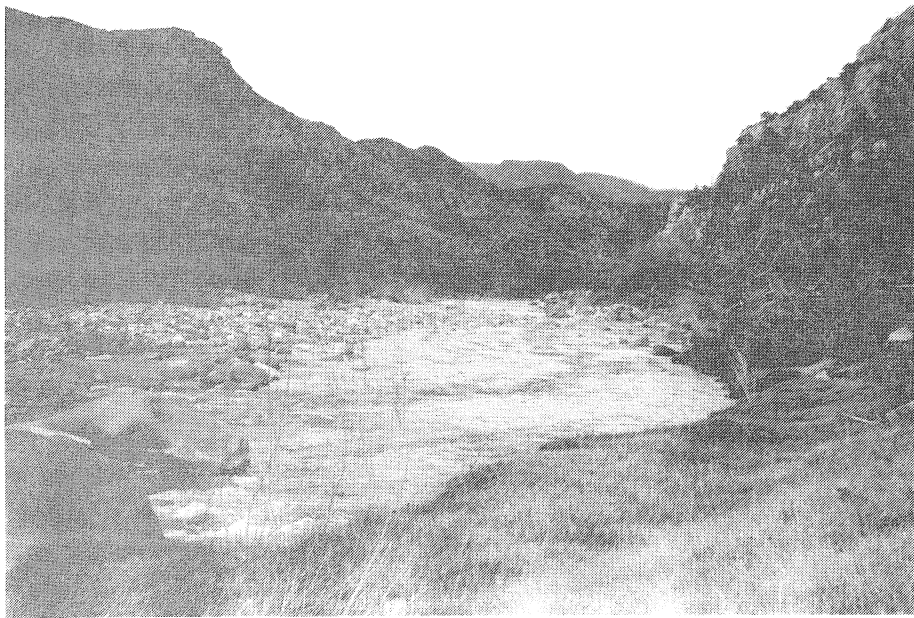
diverted the Verde's entire flow to the opposite left side. A careful look makes one believe that eventually the river may reclaim its old way here. For now, boaters can expect some shallow riffles in between Miles 37.4 and 37.6. (UPDATE '94: The flow has returned to the old right channel.)

Mile 38.0 - Elevation 3,540 - The brilliantly colored sandstone and limestone formations that have accompanied you for most of this journey retreat, and basalt becomes the more dominant geological feature. These 10-plus million-year-old lava flows plugged the Verde all throughout the Verde Valley, allowing sediments to form into relative newcomers such as the Whitish Verde Limestone Formation. The Verde Formation will become very familiar to you as you float the next fifty miles or so. You are entering an Eagle Closure area for the next two miles.

A small riffle is run at M. 38.0 and then at M. 38.1, you'll hit a nifty chute. Below this chute, the Verde pools behind a place that you are advised to scout from the right. "Little Swamper" was tricky before



the scour of '93 "brilloed" the bed clean up to Mile 40.2.



~ Mile 36.7 ~

the floods but now has become treacherous as well. All of the flow spills far left of the rock bar and heads into a chute with nasty trees and an undercut bank. Unless you see a clear course, it is wise to line over the rock bar until open flow resumes.

Mile 38.8 - Here is a dogleg that became slightly less squirrely when some of the larger obstructions were displaced by flooding. Use caution nevertheless. At Miles 38.9 and 39.1, you may find some small springs on the right during wetter periods.

Mile 39.0 - Elevation 3,520 - Prior to and after the gauging station on the left, you'll run the "Gauge Drops." "Gauge One" is mild and is typical, but "Gauge Two" is long and steeper, requiring attentiveness to avoid constant rocks.

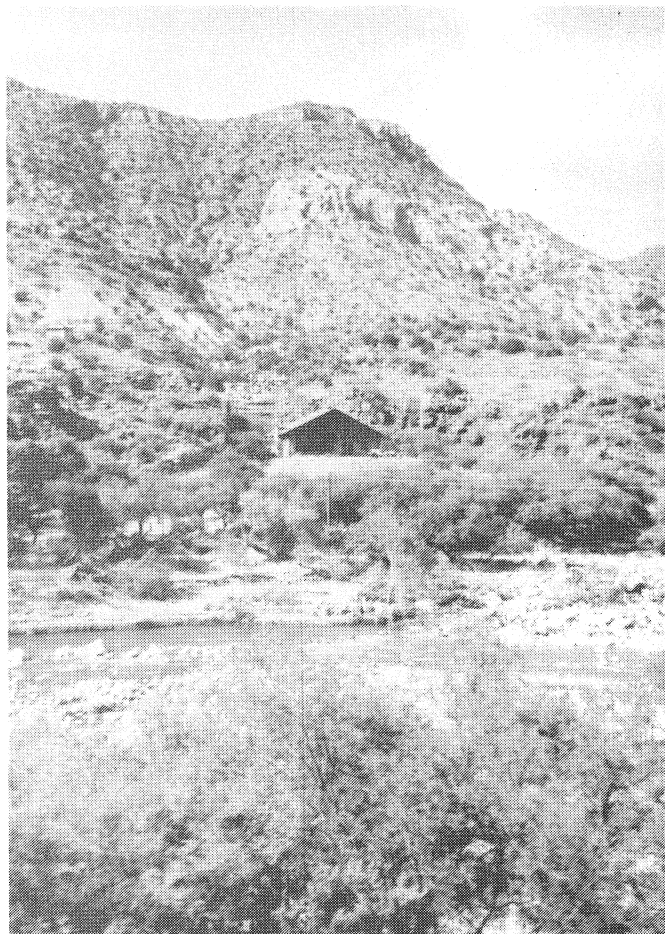
As you make the turn at the gauge, you'll be entering Box Canyon. From the seat of your boat, you'll see why this upcoming three miles is so aptly named by the locals. Box Canyon is completely inaccessible by vehicles until SOB Canyon. Even the companion railbed heads well away and out of sight across the flats to the west. Box Canyon is a serene and unique place — a great area to plan your final camp before your pullout at TAPCO or Tuzigoot.

Mile 40.0 - Elevation 3,500 - Occasional riffles may be seen between the gauge and Mile 40.0 but all in all

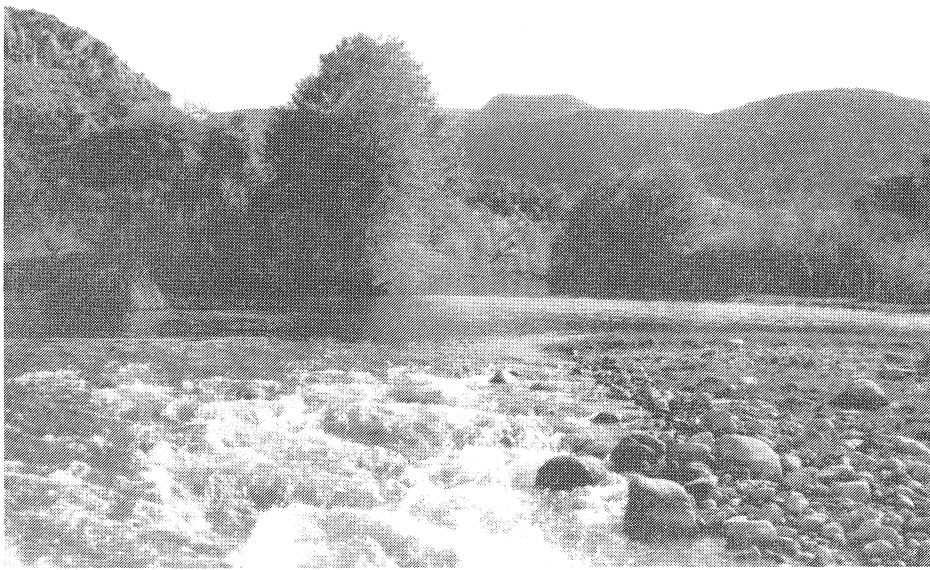
Mile 40.3 - Here is the only notation of "rapids" on all of the 7.5 topos of the Verde River. I wonder about that. If you are like me, you'll probably arrive at this spot with great anticipation during your first tour down here. Don't be disappointed. What you will find is a lengthy and fun rock-dodger created by the break in the basalt on the left, but all in all the "USGS Rapids" are quite ordinary and typical of scores of other drops found up and down the Verde.

A couple more small riffles may be encountered at Miles 40.6 and just prior to Mile 41.0.

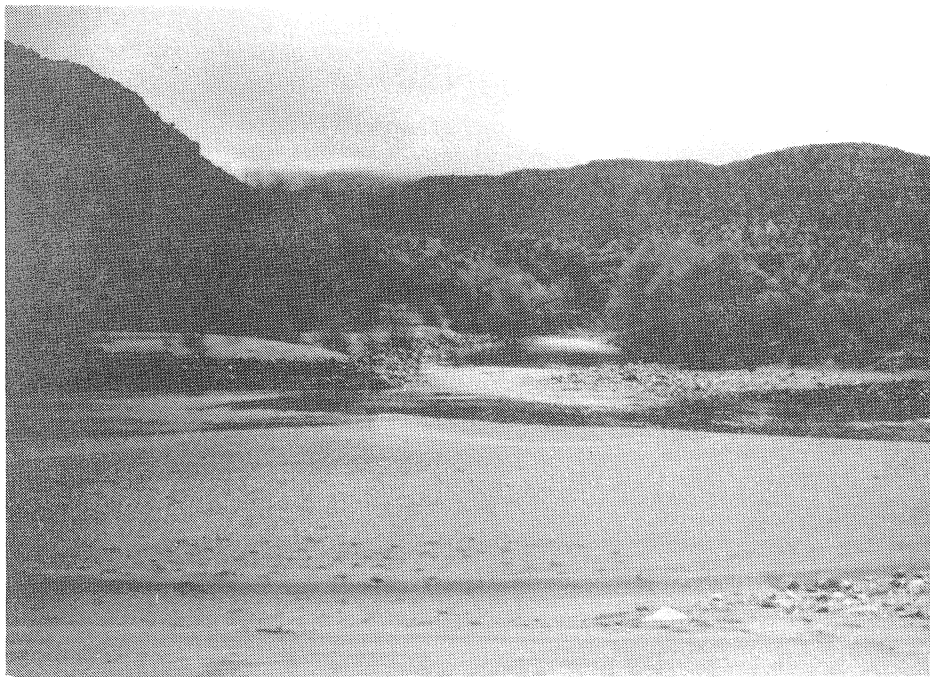
Mile 41.0 - Elevation 3,480 - This part of the heart of Box Canyon was proposed as a dam site in the 1930's



~ Mile 37.0 ~



~ Mile 37.4 - Pre 1993 Floods ~



~ Mile 37.4 - Post 1993 Floods ~

by the Department of the Interior. Had the “Gittings Dam” been built, the Verde’s natural flow would have been stymied all the way to Mormon Pocket and Sycamore’s lower six miles would have been inundated. Can you imagine? Many among us would prefer damming the Verde in such logical places like Box Canyon – flood control, irrigation, recreation, residential and municipal needs are all good reasons – and sound arguments for or against big water projects

41

will continue to keep debate lively for the foreseeable future.

I, for one, am glad that many creative, economically and ecologically trained people on both sides of the issue are continuing to search and plan for other ways to meet our water needs. Float down here, imagine – and come to your own conclusions.

The first half of Mile 41.0 is punctuated by small riffles, and the remainder is level and slow.

Mile 42.0 - Elevation 3,470 — This mile triples in elevation drop from the previous mile. Your first descent is into the split channels at M. 42.1. This spot is mottled with trees trying to make a toehold between the many small channels. Your best choice may be dead center. Below the split channels you may notice a curious wooden structure secured to the wall on the left. I’m not certain of the purpose, but it could possibly be an old nesting box.

The Verde flows easily and relatively unobstructed until you reach the hairpin turn at SOB Canyon. During higher flows, you may wish to pull over to check out SOB Drop – it can be pushy and squirrely especially at the turn where a new confused channel is carving its way right of the original course.

There are a couple of stories about how SOB got its name. The most common is this: In 1911, when William Clark and his workers were building the railway, they came to this canyon that would require a lot of time, materials and smarts to cross. While assessing the situation, Mr. Clark himself is supposed to have muttered something to the effect that indeed it will be a son of a b—— to build a trestle over this deep canyon. They accomplished the remarkable task

and the name for it stuck.

Mile 43.0 - Elevation 3,440 - The Box Canyon starts to open up and the character of the river starts to change. The Verde's long march through the Verde Valley has begun.

A diversion dam at Mile 43.3 that presumably helped divert water for Agape Ranch irrigation was wiped out in 1993. Floaters should watch for a rebuild in the future. Through the last half of M. 43 where the terrain noticeably widens, the Verde is slow and braided.

Mile 44.0 - Elevation 3,420 - At this place where another formidable tressel, made in part of a recycled roundhouse turntable, is seen on the right, the Verde's sluggish flow is channeled into a narrow chute with small waves. Below this drop the Verde pools until M. 44.6 where you hit another chute very similar to the last. Go by an old pump house on the right, be wary of a small diversion dam full of metallic garbage, and then you'll be approaching the wide southerly turn toward the TAPCO RAP.

Mile 45.0 - Elevation 3,400 - The Verde works through the TAPCO riffles, pools and braids for the next mile. All along the left shore, you can expect to see many recreationists who have accessed the Verde through the network of roads and cottonwood groves of TAPCO.

Mile 46.0 - Elevation 3,390 - Since SOB Canyon, you've gotten a glimpse or two of the TAPCO Smokestack. Now you are at the place on the river that is closest to the old monolith and TAPCO power station. It may be tempting to nose around here a while, but be aware that it is all private and posted.

TAPCO was built in 1917-18 to help meet the electrical needs for the copper mining industry in Clarkdale and Jerome. World War I ended shortly thereafter and a sharp decline in the demand for copper products resulted. Timing



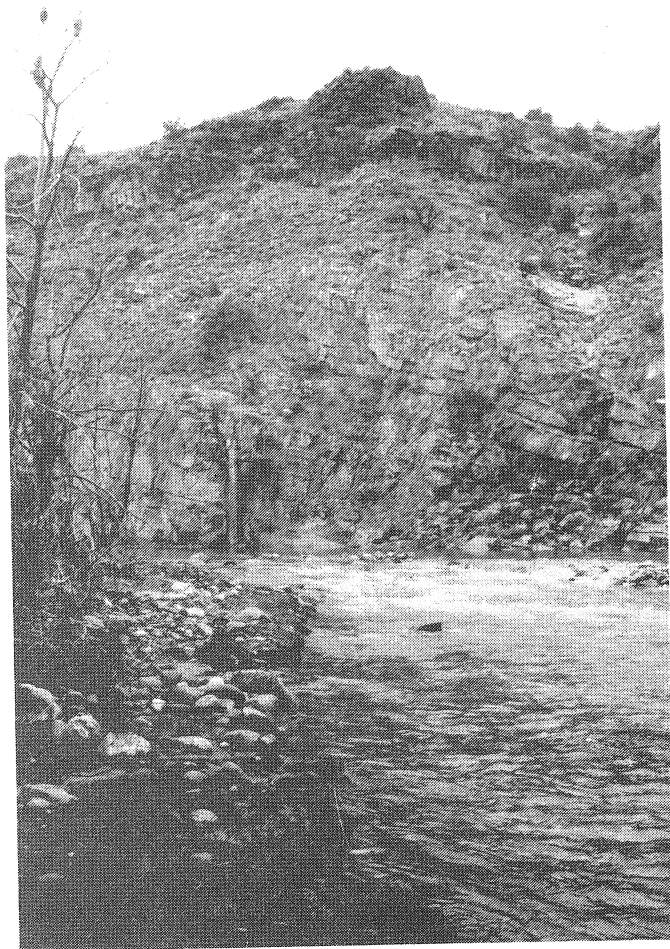
~ Mile 38.6 - "Little Swamper" ~

is everything! TAPCO, an oil-fired plant, continued to modestly contribute to the general power needs of the Verde Valley for forty years. This small remnant of the past boom times was mothballed for good in the 1960's in favor of more modern generating stations elsewhere.

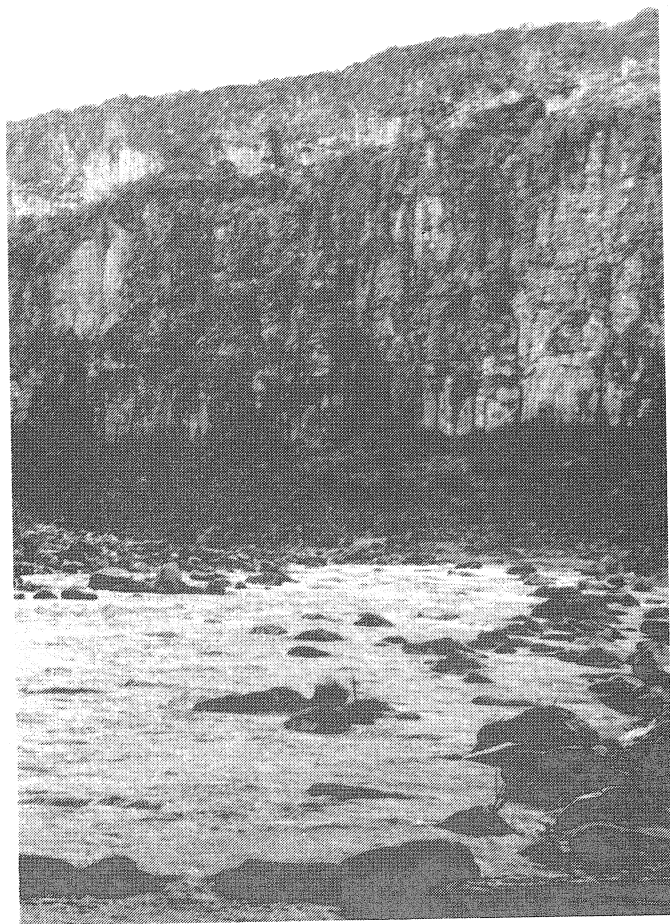
Throughout Mile 46.0, the Verde can be very low and slow as it braids the wide floodplain. There are many new strainers to watch for around here, too. Under the



~ Dogleg at Mile 38.8 ~

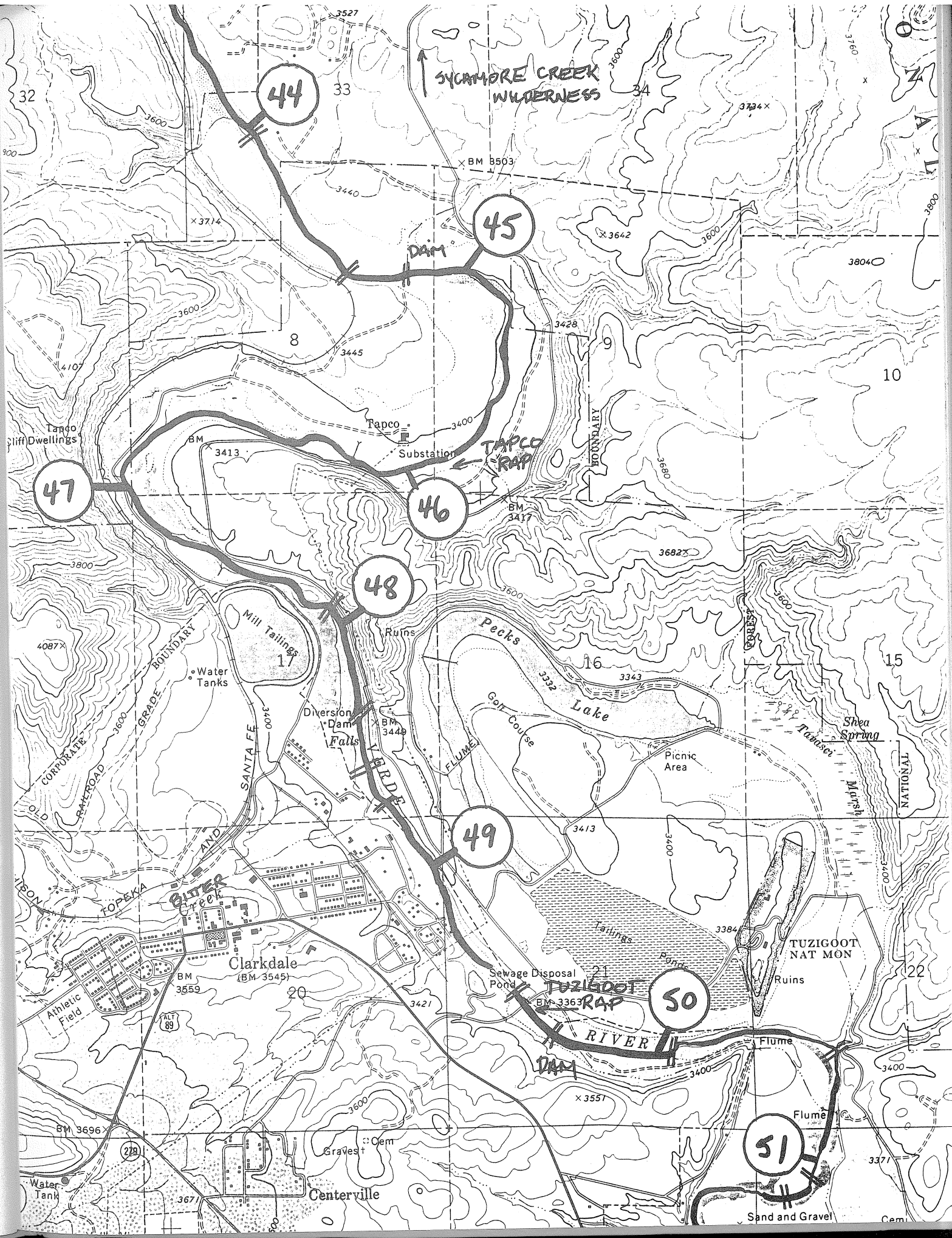


~ "Gauge Drops" - Mile 39.3 ~



~ Mile 40.3 - "USGS Rapids" ~

~ Notes ~



SYCAMORE CREEK WILDERNESS

44

45

47

46

48

49

50

51

Tapco Cliff Dwellings

Tapco Substation

Mill Tailings

Ruins

Diversion Dam Falls

Pecks Lake

Picnic Area

Shea Springs

Clarkdale (BM 3545)

TUZIGOOT NAT MON

Centerville

Sand and Gravel

BM 8503

X 3714

X 3642

3600

3445

BM 3417

36825

4087x

Water Tanks

BM 3449

3343

3600

TOPEKA

CLARKDALE

Sewage Disposal Pond

TUZIGOOT RIVER

Flume

BM 3696

3671

Graves

X 3551

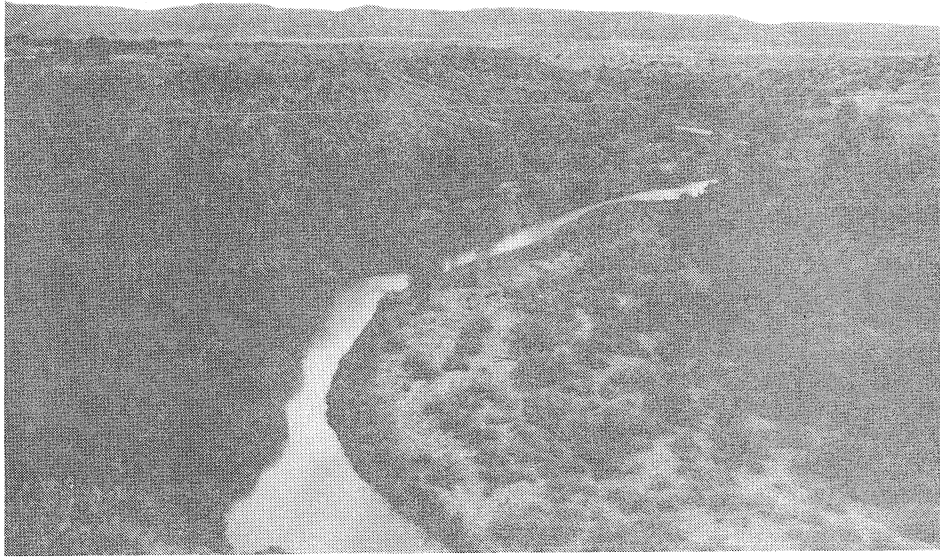
3371

228

Water Tank

Cem

Cem



~ Box Canyon - Mile 42.0 ~

wrong conditions all of Miles 45 to 48 can be a lot like work near the end of your trip.

Mile 47.0 - Elevation 3,380 - At M. 47.0, the river returns to one channel again and paddlers can make better time. This is a good spot to park if you wish to scramble up to the TAPCO cliff dwellings. Excellent views await those who do.

At Mile 47.5, the Verde veers away from a huge slag dump. This forty-acre mound of copper refining refuse from the Clarkdale Smelter redirected the Verde's course a couple of hundred yards east of its ancestral channel.

Just before Mile 48, you'll run the only small riffle of this rather sluggish mile.

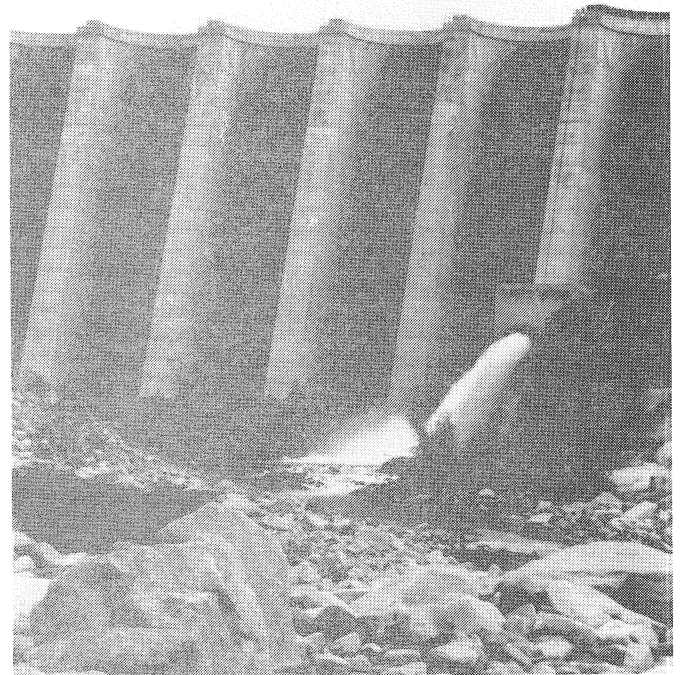
Mile 48.0 - Elevation 3,360 - Prior to 1990, you would have paddled a poolup behind the ugly diversion dam at Mile 48.4. Since then, floods have breeched and wrecked the dam, allowing the Verde to retake some semblance of free flow.

Paddlers, however, must continue to be very cautious here. There is a lot of concrete, metal and natural debris that could cause damage and injury. The flow can be swift, leaving little time to avoid a problem. It is best to scout this place no matter how many times you've been here because it changes constantly.

At M. 48.6, floaters should watch out for a new series of strainers that can present severe hazards during any level of flow. Bitter Creek then enters at M. 48.8, and it has created a nifty small rapid.

Mile 49.0 - Elevation 3,350 - Here you'll see the old bridge pilings that I presume supported the access for the mine tailings from the smelter to the expansive tailings ponds on the flats below the Tuzigoot ruins.

The river slows behind the last of the riffles of this river section. The "Tuzigoot Riffle" is but one more pick and choose rock-knocker so typical of the Upper Verde. Run or walk it and your "Train Run" is soon over. Put the memories in the hopper!



Mile 169.0 - Bartlett Dam - Can you imagine this sort of atrocity at M. 41.1?

TUZIGOOT (M.49.5) TO CAMP VERDE (M.79.0)

- Total River Miles - 29.5
- Elevation Drop - 3,350 - 3,060
- Average Drop - 10 feet per mile
- Class - Class I (Please see the Cautions section.)
- Topo Maps - Clarkdale, Page Springs, Cottonwood, Cornville, Middle Verde and Camp Verde
- Shuttle Time - 1 hour
- Days Needed - Two (except during low flows) to four

RIVER ACCESS POINTS ~RAPS~

Clarkdale - Tuzigoot Bridge (M 49.5) - Please refer to the previous chapter.

Dead Horse Ranch State Park (M. 52.6) - This increasingly popular jewel of a park provides easy access for floaters and visitors. Dead Horse is near Old Town Cottonwood and accessed by taking 5th Street north off Main. Signs show you the way. The floods of '93 completely destroyed the old low water road to Dead Horse. A new bridge was scheduled for completion by the Fall of 1993. Dead Horse can also be reached by taking the back road from Tuzigoot.

Bridgeport Bridge (M. 56.7) - From the busy intersection of Highways 279 and 89A in Cottonwood, take 89A west (toward Sedona) for less than a mile to the bridge. At this time, floaters' access is permitted river left and upstream from the bridge at the White Horse Inn parking lot.

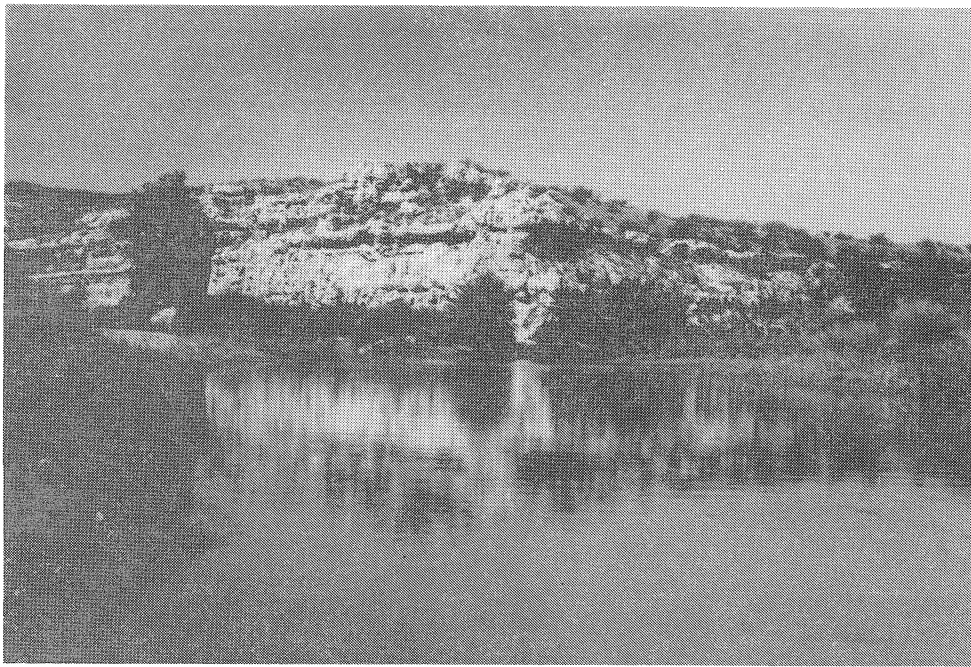
Bignotti Beach (M. 62.3) - Take highway 279 either six miles south from Cottonwood or eight miles north from I-17 until you see the Thousand Trails RV Park sign. Follow this road for a short distance until you see the left turn to Bignotti. The RAP is about a mile and a half down the road.



~ Mile 72.5 ~

Bignotti is suffering from heavy use and abuse. Many illegal roads have been carved by vehicles through the delicate beaches and beautiful mesquite bosques since the floods of 1993. To allow for the natural regeneration of Bignotti's flood plain, the Forest Service has attempted to close off all roads but the main one into the area. Please comply with the closures — it may cost you a hefty fine if you don't!

Sheep Crossing/Oak Creek Confluence (M. 64.2) - This RAP is located off the Thousand Trails road as well. Continue past the Bignotti turnoff until you reach the guard house for Thousand Trails (there's no access through there unless you are a card-carrying member). Turn left on the dirt road and proceed for about a mile to the Sheep Crossing public area. You'll have to carry your gear a couple hundred yards



~ Verde-Oak Creek Confluence - Mile 64 ~

to the river. Near this spot, sheep herders used to cross their flocks during drives to and from winter and summer pastures.

Middle Verde Road/Camp Verde North Bridge (M. 76.6) - From Camp Verde, take the Middle Verde/Montezuma Castle Road north for half a mile. Just before you reach the bridge, there is a dirt road on the right that provides your easiest access.

General Crook Highway 260/Camp Verde South Bridge (M. 79.0) - From Camp Verde, take the General Crook Highway 260 southeast for less than a half mile to the "White Bridge." People commonly access the river via the paved road to the salvage yard, but this is posted and private. It is best to go across the bridge to the dirt road on the downstream side.

Prescott National Forest is planning to upgrade this RAP and provide picnic sites and toilets. Its name-to-be is White Bridge River Park.

FURTHER NOTES ON RAPS FOR THE "VALLEY RUN"

The seven RAPS listed above are but a sampling. There are around fifteen current and proposed public access points between miles 49 and 79. The Forest

Service Headquarters in Camp Verde can provide you with up-to-date information and brochures.

A good rule of RAPS in the Valley is this — unless you possess special dispensation, or a local's knowledge, access no RAPS nor camp anywhere unless it is obviously public domain. Residential areas, reservation lands, gravel operations, commercial properties, ranches, farms, campgrounds and other restricted properties dominate the character of this heavily accessible run. With advanced planning and respect for private boundaries in mind,

you'll still find virtually unlimited options to choose from whether you wish to paddle thirty minutes or all thirty miles.

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS, HIGHLIGHTS AND CAUTIONS

As with every stretch of the Verde River, this Valley Run contains its serious hazards and all floaters should be aware of how to deal with them. The first and foremost is high water. Regardless of your skill level, this stretch should positively not be run during flooding or peak runoff. Resist the temptation to embark on a trip during these rare times because the consequences of a mishap are just too severe. Ask around about the events of Spring 1993, and you'll know just what I mean!

The next caution is the ever present strainer. These devils that usually lurk on the outside of bends and in narrow choked channels are responsible for most of the boating casualties on the Verde. They are common during all flows, and they can snare you unexpectedly if ever you let down your guard.

Some unnatural hazards exist in this run that are accidents just waiting to happen. There are several places



~ '93 Flooding - Oak Creek Confluence ~

where boaters will have to deal with metallic and concrete garbage in diversion dams and spots where junk has been dumped to prevent erosion and undercutting of banks. The river mile log notes these places. All should be negotiated with the utmost caution.

Always look well ahead and be absolutely certain that you have the time and room to maneuver well away or safely by these natural and manmade obstacles. Walk, line, wade or portage any place that looks the least bit suspicious or treacherous.

There are only two rapids of note in this entire stretch. One is a nifty little Class I+ affair just below Cherry Creek at M. 68, and the other was a dandy Class II below the I-17 bridge. In pre '93 good volume runs, I ran it several times,

swamped once and usually had a "gas" maneuvering between rocks and bridge supports. All evidence of "I-17 Drop" was scoured away during the flooding.

Brisk head winds are common along here, especially in the afternoon hours. Combine them with sluggish flow and occasional walk-throughs and you may be reduced to about a two-mile-per-hour pace . . . some things to consider in your trip planning.

With these cautions in mind, outright beginners are advised to get familiar with their canoe, kayak or inflatable on lake water before taking their first river float. Once you've tuned up and become accustomed to your craft's tippy ways, you will find great novice runs in this stretch during normal and low flows. In fact, the miles between Dead Horse and Oak Creek may be among the best and safest novice miles of the entire Verde. There are enough small riffles and obstacles to give you a feel for the Verde's wily ways.

This "Valley Run" is certainly a region of contrasts. In between sections of near pristine scenery, you'll witness a lot of habitat destruction — some of it controlled and incidental and some of it flagrant and irreversible — testaments to capital gains!

There are, however, efforts underway to preserve some of the rare and delicate cottonwood-willow ecosystem from overuse and development along this



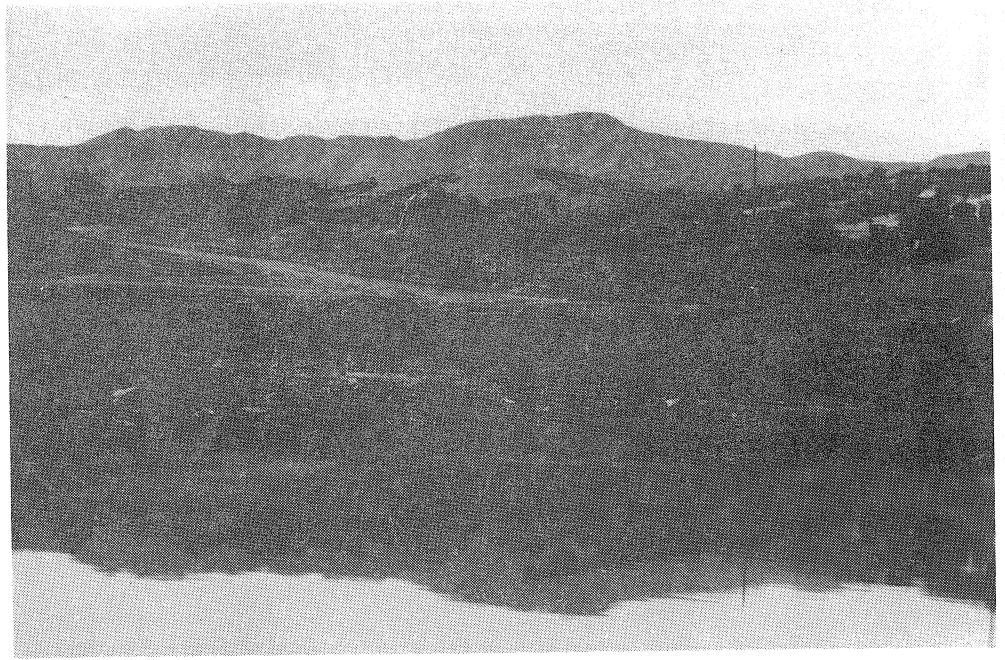
~ Pre '93 - "I-17 Rapid" - M. 74.5 ~

populated stretch.

One of the most notable efforts is the Verde River Greenway (or Greenbelt) located around Dead Horse and managed by Arizona State Parks. This project was initiated in the 1970's, but given its big boost in 1986 when then-Governor Bruce Babbitt sent out a mandate to Arizona to increase funding and plans for protecting more natural lands (especially our dwindling riparian zones).

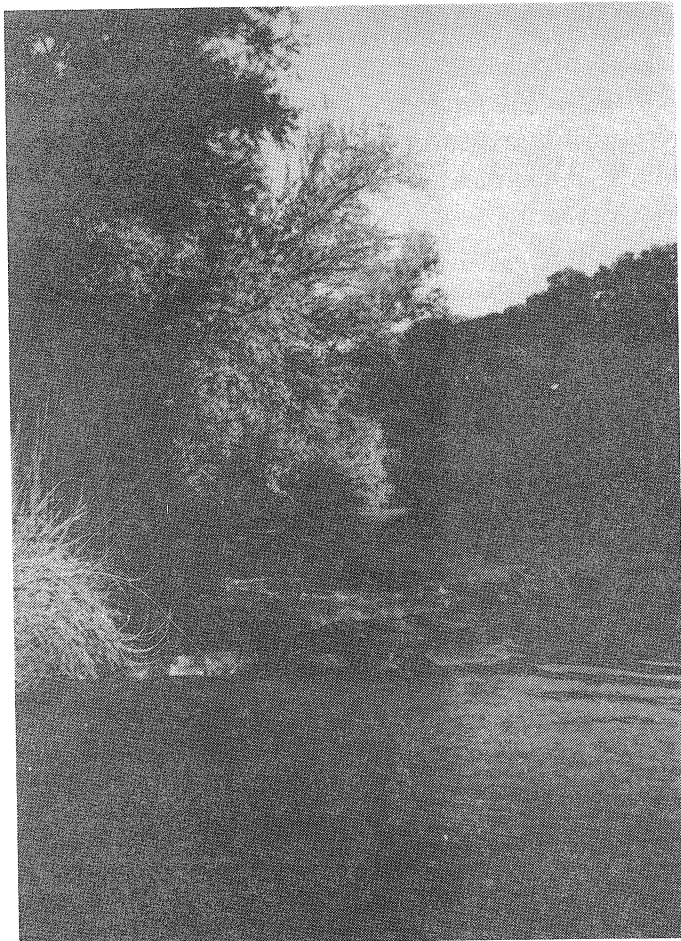
The vision is to establish a greenway corridor that allows recreational access, but limits damaging motorized and/or developmental impacts.

Although the plan is still a long way from completion (due in part to mother nature's fury as well as legal



~ The Pits - Mile 66.5 ~

and financial limitations), the vision of this project stands intact as quite a model for others to follow. There are ways to bridge the gaps between private and public interests in the complex discussion of preservation versus development. It will be interesting to watch the progress of the Greenway/Greenbelt plan. For more information, you can contact the Arizona State Parks folks at Dead Horse.

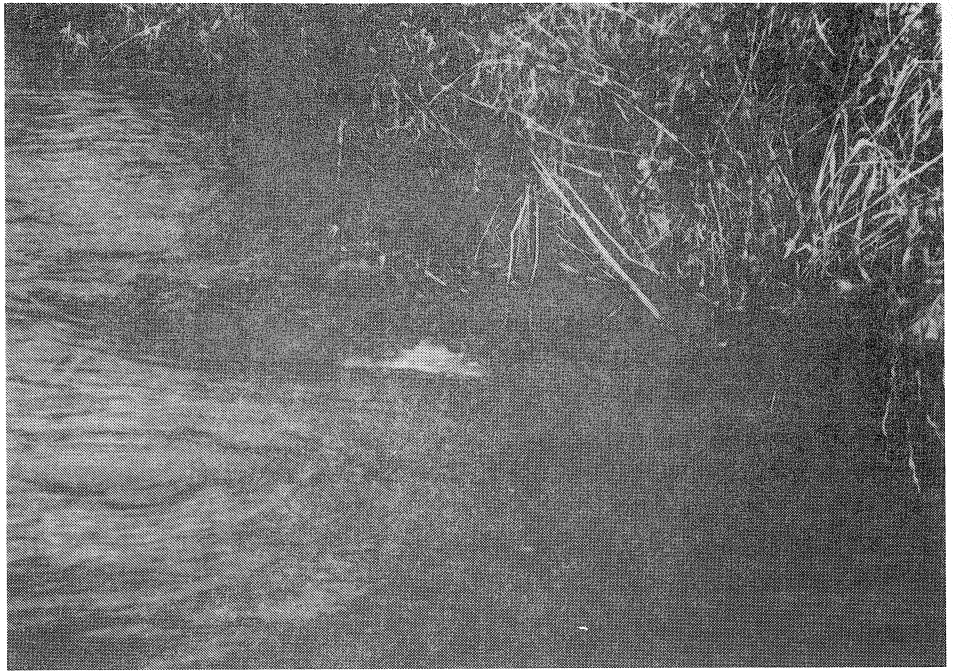


~ Mile 55.8 ~

A note to all of you ardent Verde floaters who regularly stick to the lower wild and scenic stretches Sure, the usually low and slow flow, lack of rapids, diversion dams, ugly wreckage, gravel operations, proximity to occupation and the all-around heavily impacted character are all good reasons to skip the "Valley Run." It may not be continuously pretty, much of a challenge nor a lot like a wilderness experience, but it does have its highlights! For instance, I've had runs where I've tallied more wildlife sightings (including the biggest beaver I have ever seen right below the I-17 bridge!) between miles 49 and 79 than during many lower runs. This section deserves your enthusiasm, too.

I'd urge anyone who loves this river to taste the contrasts at least once. Between its use and abuse, the "Valley Run" struggles to maintain the gracious and embracing riparian beauty and richness that attracted man here in the first place.

This leads to one final diversion before we get to the river mile log: In your reverie upon the "Valley Run," you may wish to envision what it must have been like for the "ones who have gone before" during those untold eons preceding this past century of meteoric growth and development. Their stories are fascinating and mysterious. Below is a small riffle of human history in the Verde Valley from the dawn of man to the dawn of the industrial mining era.



~ Beaver below I-17 Bridge ~

~ Notes ~

A BRIEF VALLEY RUN TIMELINE — 8,000 B.C. TO 1876

? - 8,000 B.C. - Although evidence is scant, it is a generally accepted hypothesis that Paleo-Indian people of the "Clovis Culture" roamed and hunted horse- and elephant-like big game throughout the valley during this dawning age of human habitation in the New World.

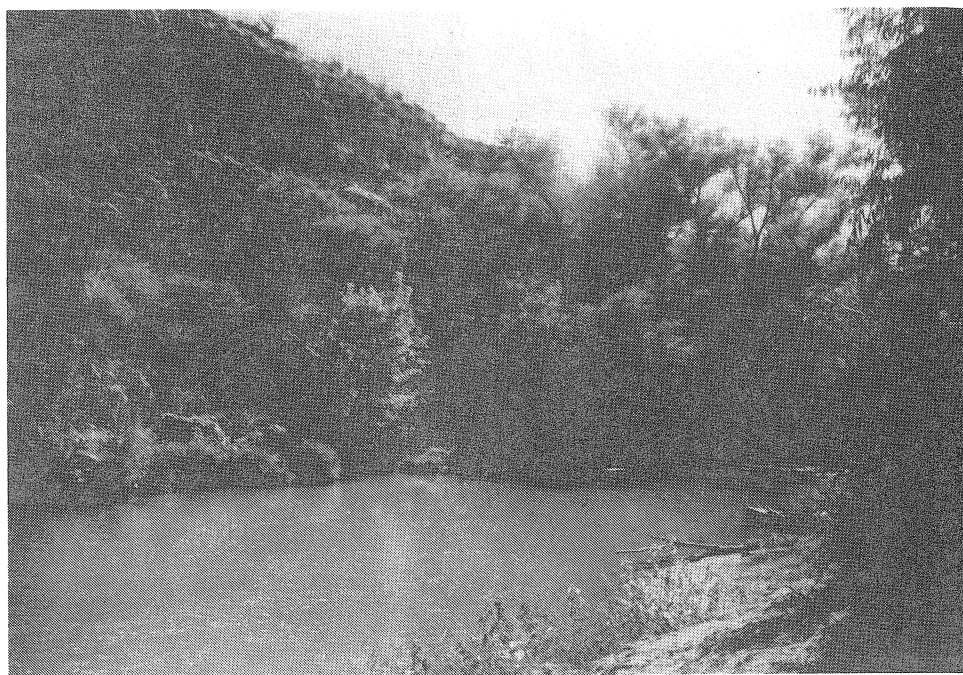
8,000 B.C. - 1 A.D. - "The Dry Creek Phase" - The first confirmed dwellers were likely foragers as well as nomadic hunters as indicated by the varied flakes, tools and projectile points found along several "Dry Creeks" of the Valley. Interestingly, most of these clues of the past originated from rocks not found in the vicinity. This fact raises many questions for researchers and provides ample grist for the mill of future studies.

1 A.D. to 600 A.D. - Permanent settlement begins in this period as agriculture takes hold as the new primary means of survival. The Southern Sinagua (Spanish for "without water") were likely a mixed blend of many archaic peoples who migrated from the north to dry farm this region of gentle climate, fertile land and abundant water.

600 A.D. to 1,000 A.D. - An incredible mingling of

cultures dominates the stories of this period. Sinagua, Hohokam, Anasazi, and other cultures meet and meld and thrive to such an extent that by 1,000 A.D. the region had become a busy center of agriculture and trade. Evidently, the Sinagua learned from the masterful Hohokam and the first Verde River irrigation channels appeared. Some of these ditches are one and the same as those used today.

1,000 A.D. to 1,400 A.D. - Advancements in farming, irrigation, social cooperativeness, trade networks, tool and ornamental craftsmanship, as well as architecture all contributed to making this the prominent period of Indian culture in the Verde Valley. Two must-see stops for visitors interested in learning more are Tuzigoot and

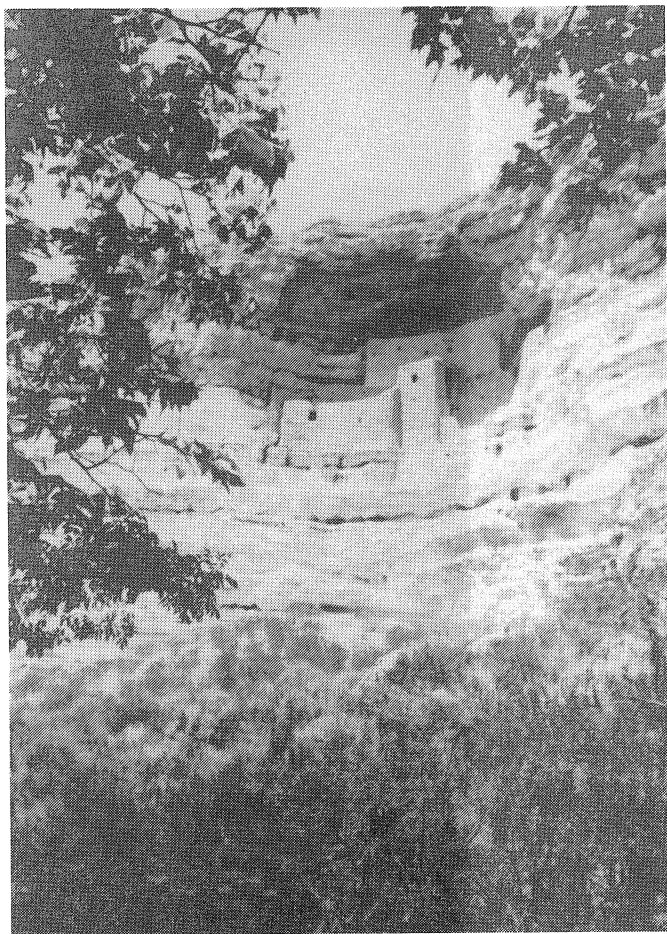


~ Mile 61 ~

Montezuma Castle. Tuzigoot (Apache for “crooked water”) is located on a hilltop above M.50.3; and Montezuma Castle (probably named by later day Spanish explorers for the Aztec Chief Montezuma) is located on a cliffside overlooking Beaver Creek about four miles north from M. 77. Why these dwellings and numerous other sites were abandoned around 1,400 remains one of the Valley’s biggest mysteries. Perhaps it was overpopulation, epidemics, drought, tribal infighting, economic imbalance, invasion – or just a lust for moving on as their predecessors had done. We may never know for sure.

1,400 A.D. to 1,600 A.D. - This is the transition period from “ancient” to “modern.” Remaining Hohokam and Sinagua continued to dwell in the Valley and witness the influx of the more nomadic Yavapai and Apache peoples. Transition can bring strife, and it is generally agreed that this period had its share as the opposing cultures clashed.

1,583 A.D. - The first Anglos to visit the Valley were probably Spaniards. In 1583, Don Antonio de Espejo and his expedition followed a shepherd’s crook trail from the north to check on reports that the region held valuable mineral wealth. It did and does, but Don Antonio found little at that time to justify a prolonged stay. Before he left, he christened the Verde with the name, “El Rio de las Reyes,” the River of Kings.



~ Montezuma Castle ~

1,600 A.D. to 1848 - Occasional Spanish expeditions came and left until the late 1700's. In the early and mid-1800's, mountain men such as James Ohio Pattie, Kit Carson, Antoine Leroux and Pauline Weaver passed through on trapping and/or scouting ventures. The Yavapai-Apache people lived and prospered relatively undisturbed until —



1848 - 1863 - This was the dawn of profound and lasting change for the Valley, its natives and all of Arizona. In 1848, the U.S. and Mexican governments concluded the Mexican War and signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ceded enormous property to the soon-to-be Territory of Arizona. This step towards territorialism, plus the raging gold rushes and general westward movement, would inevitably increase the Anglo presence, both military and otherwise, across Yavapai-Apache lands. The seeds for friction and warfare in the Verde Valley were sown.

1863 - 1864 - On February 24, 1863, President Lincoln signed the law officially declaring Arizona a U.S. Territory. In early 1864, Arizona's Territorial

~ They are making a comeback! ~

Government was born near Prescott. Military and civilian traffic through the Verde Valley increased. There were, however, still no permanent settlers except for the Yavapai-Apache.

1865 - Camp Verde (though it would not receive that lasting name for several years) became the first documented white settlement of the Valley. A handful of men from Prescott built a fort near the confluence of Clear Creek upon an ancient Hohokam pithouse. They hoped to raise crops to sell to the burgeoning

populace in Prescott. By May, 1865, the fort contained seventeen men, three women and three children. That month, they were attacked, and while not suffering severe casualties, they did lose crops and stock. A call was sent out for military help. In August of that same year, the call was answered and nineteen troops arrived on foot to establish temporary Fort Lincoln near the settlers. Five months later, the tent camp at Clear Creek was moved to a "permanent" location upstream at the Beaver Creek confluence. The name "Fort Lincoln" was changed in 1868 to "Camp Verde" because of the confusion of too many other U.S. posts named in honor of the



~ Just Off I-17 on the General Crook Highway ~

slain president.

1870 - 1873 - The civilian population of the Valley was around 200. Conflicts with natives continually escalated and more troops were added to the roster of Camp Verde. In 1871, Lieutenant Colonel George Crook took over the military operations. More troops were added again and the campaign to drive the Yavapai-Apache into physical and economic submission began in earnest. In 1872, Camp Verde made its final move to its present site near Mile 78. Seven years after the move came its final name change to "Fort Verde" — signifying greater permanence. It was the staging area for the concluding campaigns, and it stands now as the Fort Verde State Historic Park.

1873 - 1885 - The Yavapai-Apache Chief Chalipun surrendered to General Crook on April 23, 1873, and 2,200 Yavapai and Tonto Apache were placed on the Rio Verde Reservation. In a short time, a third of the vanquished would perish from malnutrition, malaria, small pox and dysentery. Small autonomous bands continued their free ways, and it wasn't until 1882 with the Battle of Big Bry Wash that one could say the



~ A Half Mile West of Mile 78 ~
skirmishes were over in the vicinity of the Valley. Elsewhere, the renowned Geronimo would not succumb and surrender until 1885.

The activities directed from Fort Verde officially concluded when the post was abandoned in 1890. Bearers of the Native American bloodlines became quietly inflamed residents of small reserves in Camp Verde, Middle Verde, Prescott, Fort McDowell and San Carlos.

1876 - 1953 - Even a brief discussion of the Mining Era from the first claim in 1876 above Jerome to the final blow of the smelters' stacks in 1953, is far beyond the scope of this guide. There is just too much to tell! — and, besides, it's high time to return to "El Rio de las Reyes."

TIMELINE CONCLUSION

Reliable sources of water, rich mineral wealth, fertile grazing and food-producing lands, hospitable climate, nearby forested regions, beautiful scenery, crossroads of trade, once abundant game and many other factors have all contributed to making the Verde Valley one of Arizona's



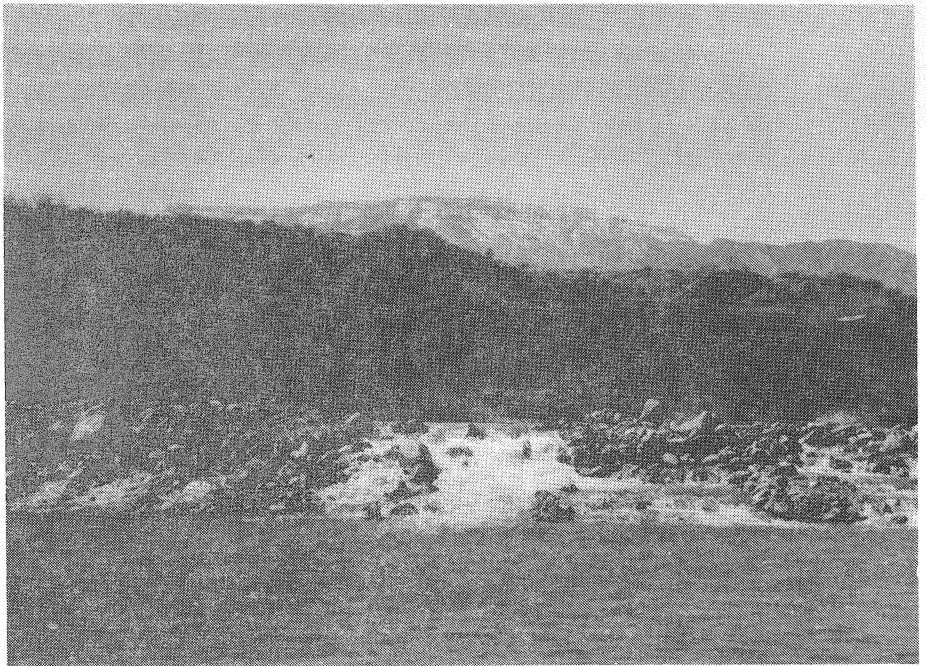
~ A Lower Camp Verde Dawn ~

unique places to study every period of our rich cultural past.

RIVER MILE LOG

Mile 49.5 - Elevation 3,350 - Soon after putting in at the bridge, you may encounter a diversion dam for Dead Horse Park. Post '93 floods, all that remained was a small rock bar. If it reappears, you'll likely want to scout the area before running it.

Mile 50.0 - Elevation 3,340 - There is no way to accurately describe what you may find in this mile. Previous to the floods, floaters had to manhandle their boats over the concrete mess that funnelled most of the flow into the notorious Cottonwood Ditch around M. 50.3. It would be an understatement to say that the floods



~ Diversion Dam - Mile 49.7 - Pre '93 ~

changed this mess — they dang near destroyed the whole kit and kaboodle! Due to the Cottonwood Ditch's importance, it is all but inevitable that major water works construction will appear here again soon.

Where the Verde turns due south at M. 50.5, be watchful for debris and rock bars. It is a relatively lovely area with nice upstream views of Tuzigoot.

The old elevated flume at M. 50.8, a one-of-a-kind on the Verde, is now a goner.

Mile 51.0 - Elevation 3,320 - Until the Verde cleans and re-establishes itself, you may encounter squirrely and choked going at the turns at Miles 51.1 and 51.5. Where Mescal Gulch enters at Mile 51.7, be watchful for strainers and concrete scat. Mescal Gulch is so named because of a forest of century plants once found up a way. Stories are told that the gulch was the scene of a battle between the Yavapais and Hualapais in the mid-1800's. Despite the agave being a diet staple for natives, no Indian would set foot in Mescal Gulch after the battle for fear of the ghosts that took up residence there!

Mile 52.0 - Elevation 3,310 - Here is a tormented stretch that is trying to make a comeback. It was once an expansive gravel operation. Speaking of goners, the huge digger that stood as a rusting reminder for years at M. 52.0 has either been hauled away or



~ Cottonwood Ditch - Mile 50.3 ~



CAUTION - STRAINERS AND CONCRETE!
DEAD HORSE RAP

WATCH FOR STRAINER AT ALL TIME

52

53

54

55

56

57

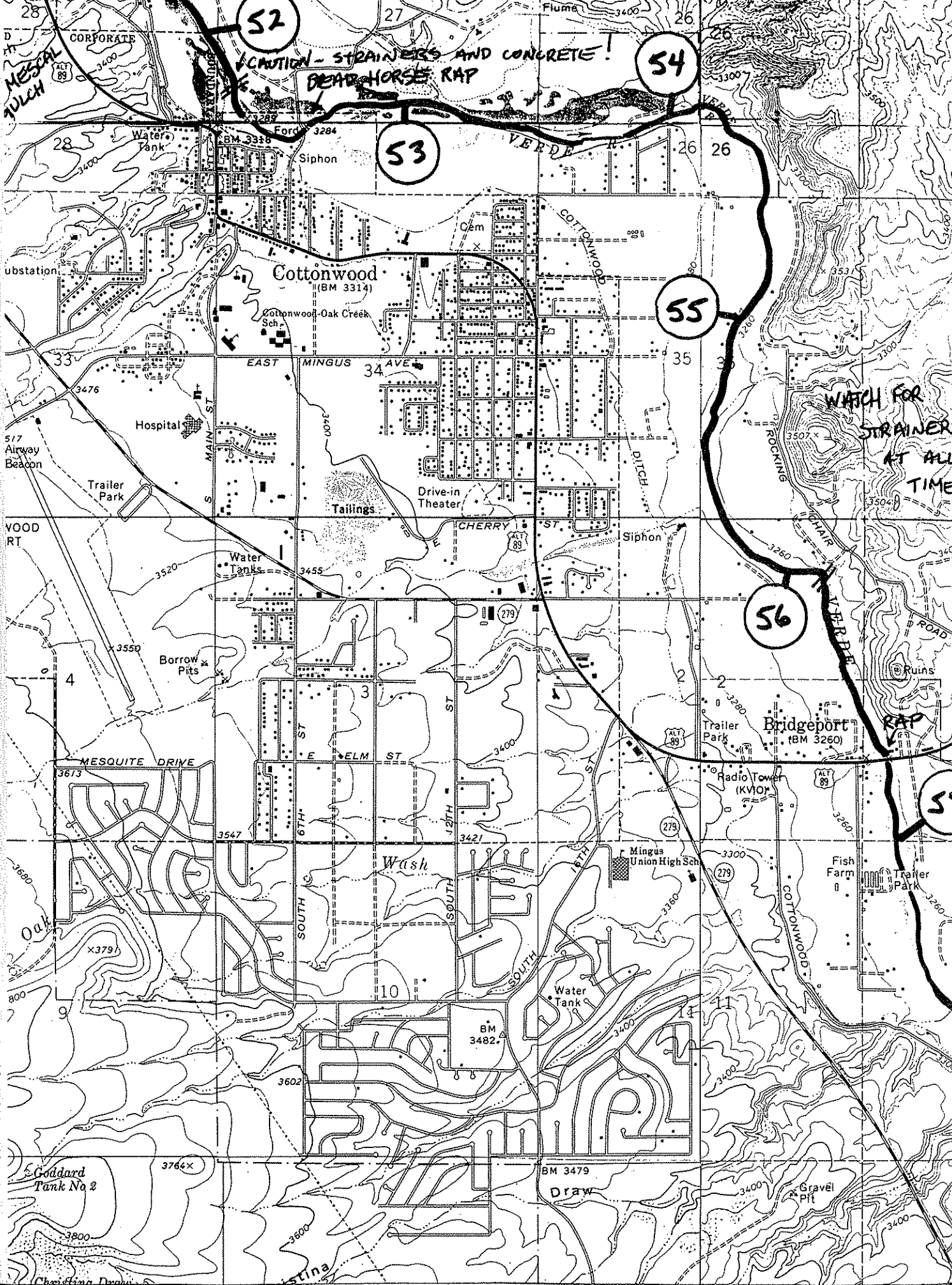
MESQUITE TULCH

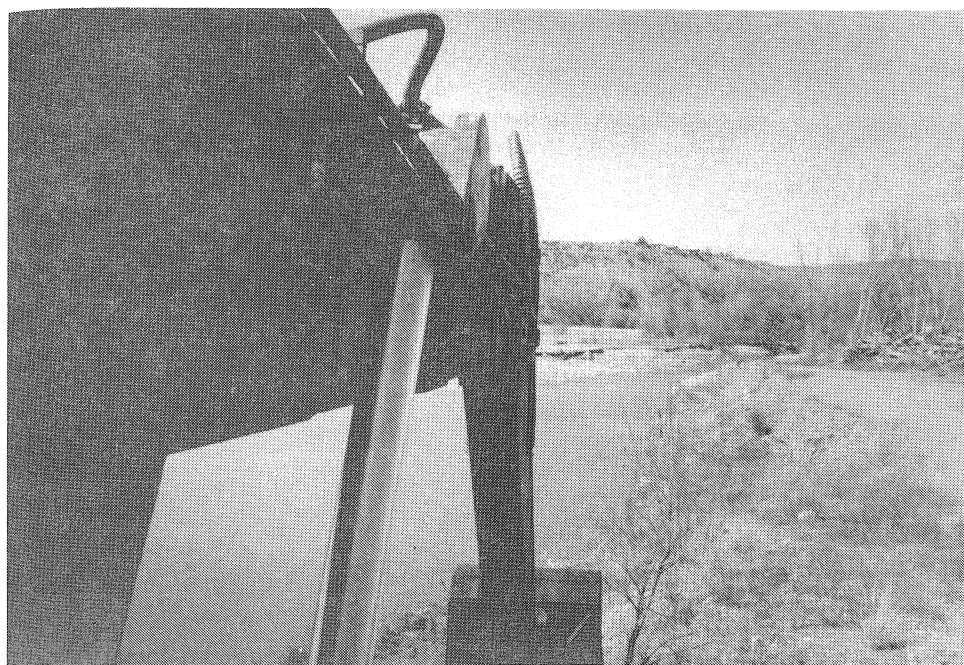
Cottonwood (BM 3314)

Bridgeport (BM 3260)

Goddard Tank No 2

Draw





~ Mile 52.0 ~

become entombed in the sands.

Around M. 52.2, be very cautious due to more strainers, and a nasty old concrete dam. Don't run blindly into this spot. In elevated flows right after the floods in early '93, the channel was so choked that I had to drag my gear far right over the four-foot remnant of the dam.

Mile 52.6 - Dead Horse RAP - Here you'll see the new bridge into Dead Horse constructed in the summer of 1993. During construction, the engineers channeled the flow far left under the access road into two small culverts. To me it was fascinating to witness the whole of the mighty Verde running at 50 c.f.s through these small ducts where three months earlier it had run headstrong and hellbent at 50,000 c.f.s.! Ah, the incredible ebbs and flows of this River!

For years, the flood damage to this beautiful Greenway will be evident.

Mile 53.0 - Elevation 3,280 - Pretty Greenway continues and you can get a relatively remote feeling paddling through here. Some small riffles and walk-throughs can be expected during the normally low flows.

Mile 54.0 - Elevation 3,270 - The river turns south and touches upon a small wedge of forest land on the

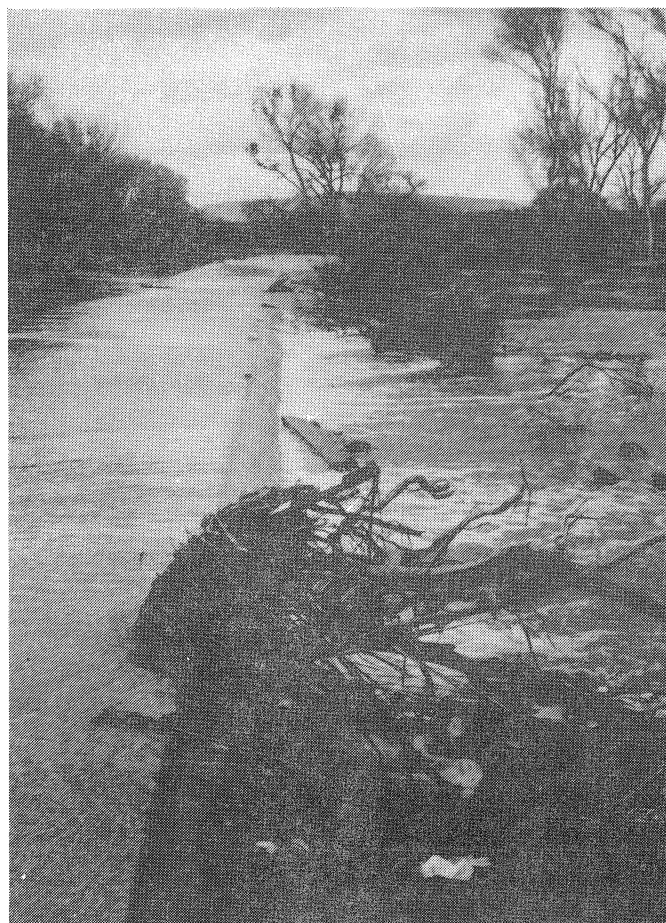
left — the first technically public piece of shoreline since well above TAPCO.

Mile 55.0 - Elevation 3,260 - The sluggish flow through the flats of the mile picks up noticeably a little below M. 55. Then you slow up again as you meander through another area pillaged for its gravel.

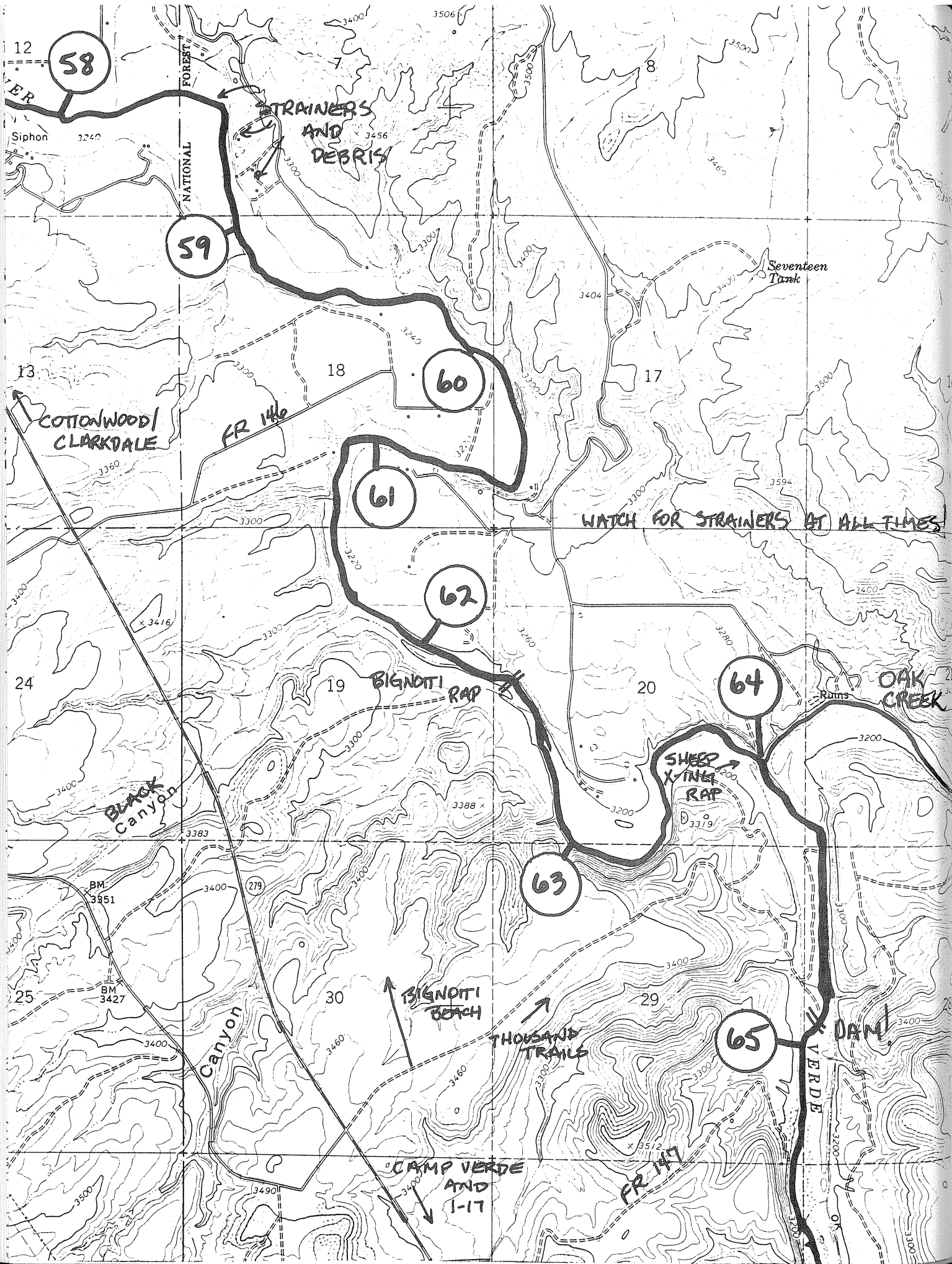
Mile 56.0 - Elevation 3,260 - After the small riffle just past M. 56.0, paddlers should again raise their guard against strainers. They are common from here to below the bridge.

Mile 56.7 - Bridgeport RAP -

This little-known enclave gained state-wide attention when it was hit in February, 1993. Many places up and down the River sustained terrible damage, but



~ Old Ford - Mile 52.6 ~



58

59

60

61

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64

65

STRAINERS
AND
DEBRIS

WATCH FOR STRAINERS AT ALL TIMES

BIGNOTTI
RAP

SHEEP
XING
RAP

BIGNOTTI
BEACH

THOUSAND
TRAILS

CAMP VERDE
AND
I-17

VERDE
DAM

OAK
CREEK

Seventeen
Tank

NATIONAL
FOREST

COTTONWOOD/
CLARKDALE

BLACK
Canyon

Canyon

12

Siphon

13

24

25

18

19

30

17

20

29

8

28

few as severe as here. Fortunately, the bridge had been upgraded the previous year, so it was able to withstand the torrents; but many homeowners were not so lucky. It possibly will take them as long to recoup and rebuild as it will take the riverbanks to return to the lushness that so characterized this stretch before the 100-year flood.

Mile 57.0 - Elevation 3,250 - Mile 57 is usually pretty sluggish, but one must still be cautious because each little turn can possess some push into debris.

Mile 58.0 - Elevation 3,240 - It is deceptive from the river, but much of miles 57 and 58 is occupied shoreline. Get down a way before looking for any small camp spots. Place a wake-up call around Mile 58.6 because the next quarter mile or so can harbor some hazardous strainers and obstructions.

Mile 59.0 - Elevation 3,230 - Travel is normally beautiful and serene going in this mile as paddlers run small riffles and chutes below the encroaching pretty hills on the left.

Mile 60.0 - Elevation 3,220 - Mile 60 starts with a pretty pool. The pool terminates with a small riffle. At the hairpin turn at M. 60.5, you may notice how the Verde is working left of its earlier channel. You may find a tangled mess of debris near the end of M. 60 that requires caution to negotiate. Very pretty and pristine in here.

Mile 61.0 - Elevation 3,210 - For the next two miles, the Verde again touches upon some public lands on the right — rare treats of this “Valley Run.” If you’ve started from Tuzigoot and found good going, here you may find a perfect first night’s camp in a quiet and relatively remote region. I especially like camping from Mile 61.0 to 61.5. Below there, you likely will share the air with folks who’ve accessed the river by vehicle to Black Canyon and Bignotti.

Mile 62.0 - Elevation 3,200 - From Mile 62 to 63, both shores are public forest lands. Just below the



~Mile 57.0 ~

Bignotti Beach RAP and lovely pool, the River veers right down a noteworthy drop. While enjoying this riffle, paddlers should watch for possible currents into trees and the wall.

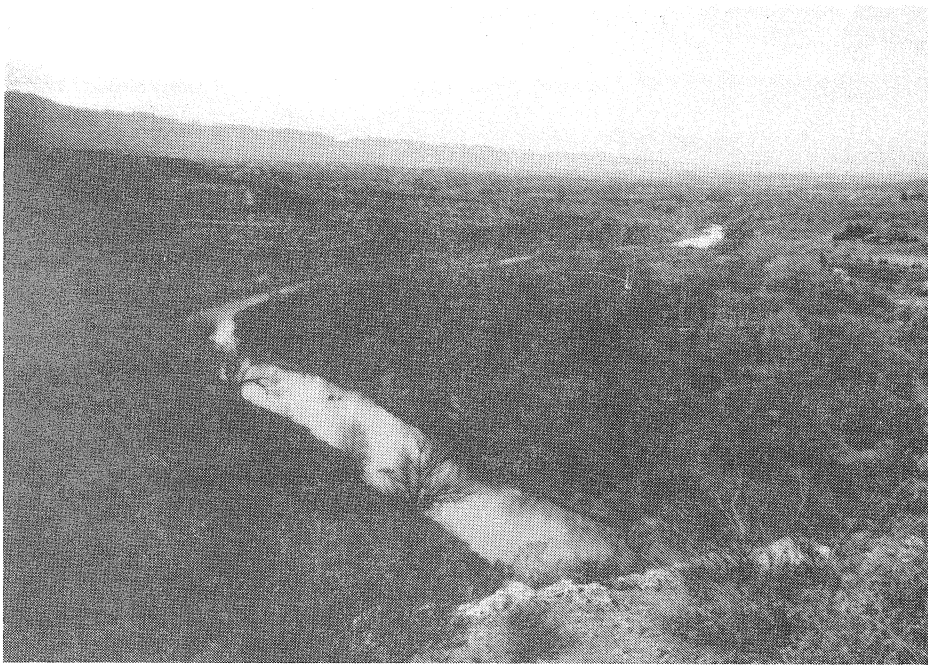
Mile 63.0 - Elevation 3,200 - A gorgeous mile with scenic hills on the right, small riffles, mid-stream rocks and colorful character.

Mile 64.0 - Elevation 3,190 - This is the halfway point of the “Valley Run.” Majestic Oak Creek concludes its fifty-mile frolicking course from its sources above Oak Creek Canyon and joins forces with the Verde in a usually quiet manner behind the prominent wall on the left. During spring thaws and summer monsoons, Oak Creek can feed the Verde with enough flow to make your ride noticeably pushier below.

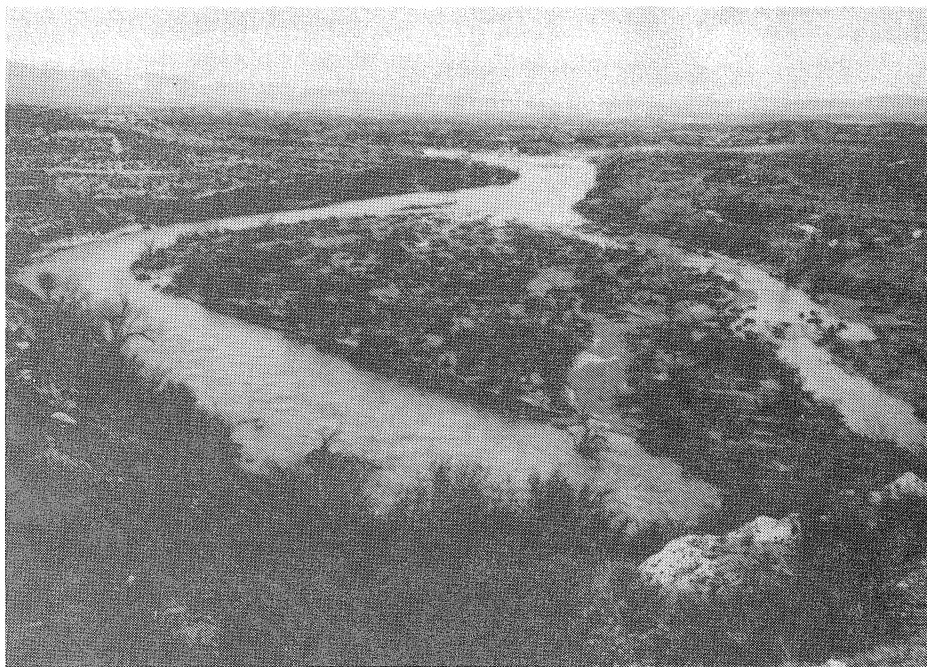
The ruins on the hill overlooking Oak Creek are on a fenced-off parcel of private land.

Mile 64.2 - Sheep Crossing RAP - The river channel is far left here, making it difficult for first-timers to spot the access to the parking area. If you are planning to conclude here, you may want to find your shortest route before shouldering your gear. Although the adjacent Thousand Trails is private, I’ve found them amenable to floaters who may need water, a phone or refreshments from their small company

~Notes~



~ Mile 63.5 Normally ~



~ Mile 63.5 During Floods ~

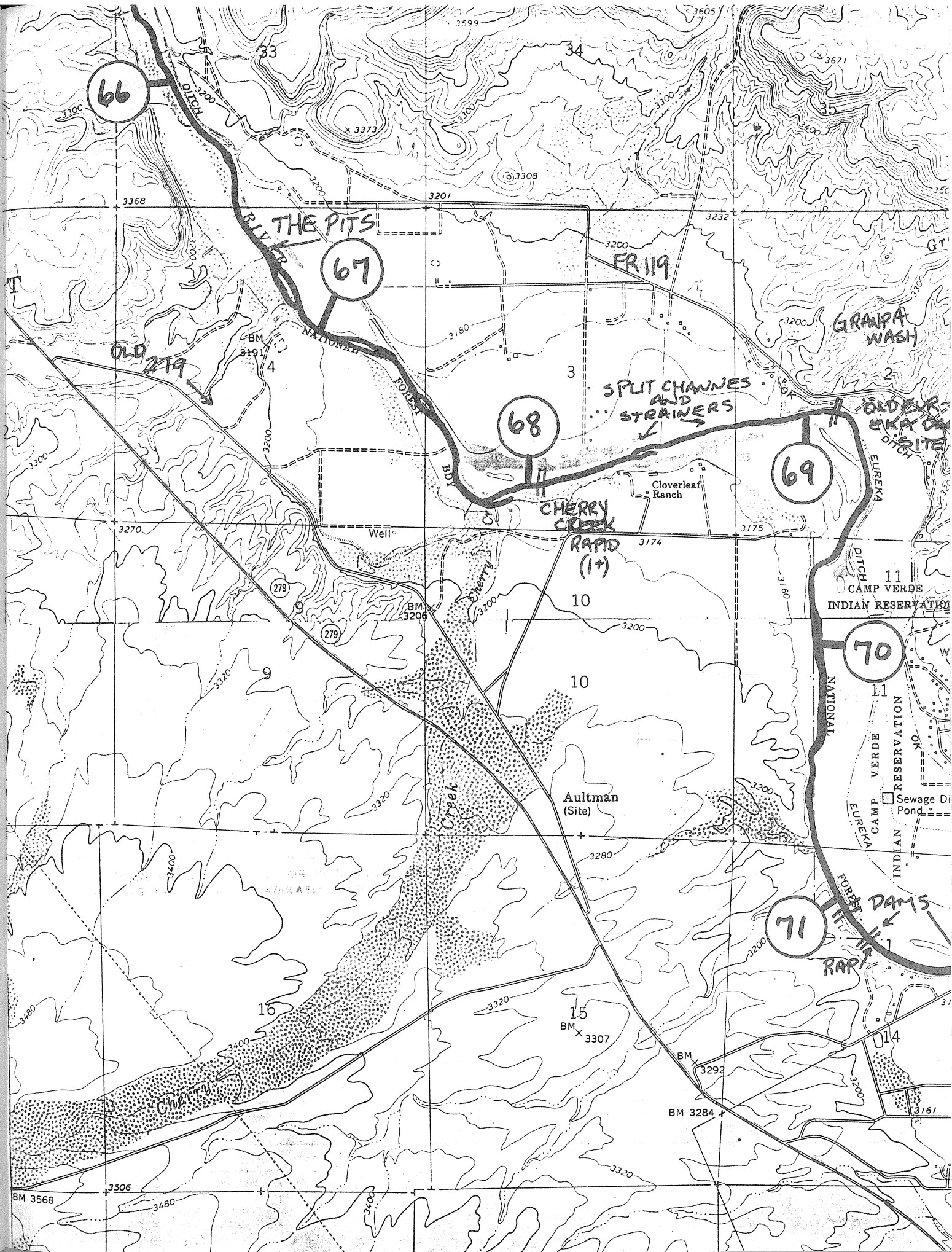
store.

A small riffle is usually evident around the turn at M. 64.3.

Mile 64.9 - The Verde slows and pools behind the OK Ditch diversion dam at M.64.9. The OK Ditch and the Eureka several miles downstream are a couple of the major irrigators for the Middle Verde region and the Camp Verde Indian Reservation.

The OK dam can be run or lined far right. Approach it cautiously because this two-foot drop can contain some damaging debris. If you go far left, you'll be paddling the ditch.

Mile 65.0 - Elevation 3,180 - Below the diversion dam, you can expect some riffles and debris dodging. Verde waters try to reclaim their freedom from the ditch periodically for the next mile or so.



66

67

68

69

70

71

THE PITS RIVER

CHERRY CREEK RAPID (1+)

SPLIT CHANNES AND STRAINERS

GRANPA WASH

OLD BUR EKA DA SITE

CAMP VERDE INDIAN RESERVATION

CAMP VERDE INDIAN RESERVATION

FORBES DAMS RAPID

FR 119

Cloverleaf Ranch

Aultman (Site)

Sewage Pond

OLD 279

Well

279

279

16

15

14

BM 3568

3506

3480

BM 3284

3161

3400

3320

3200

3200

3280

3320

3200

3174

3175

3160

3270

3368

3201

3232

3599

3605

33

34

35

356

3671

3300

3480

3400

3400

3320

3200

3200

3200

3161

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Around M. 65.4, you may run a slight riffle where the slope rises on the right. Dead ahead, you get a nicely framed view of the Pine Mountain area. Savor these confines because soon you'll enter another Valley Run demolition zone.

Mile 66.0 - Elevation 3,170 - There is a big pool as you enter a thoroughly forgettable stretch. It's "The Pits." Generally, it is best to stay left, but be watchful of dumped cars and a fence or two. Yes, "The Pits" — enough said.

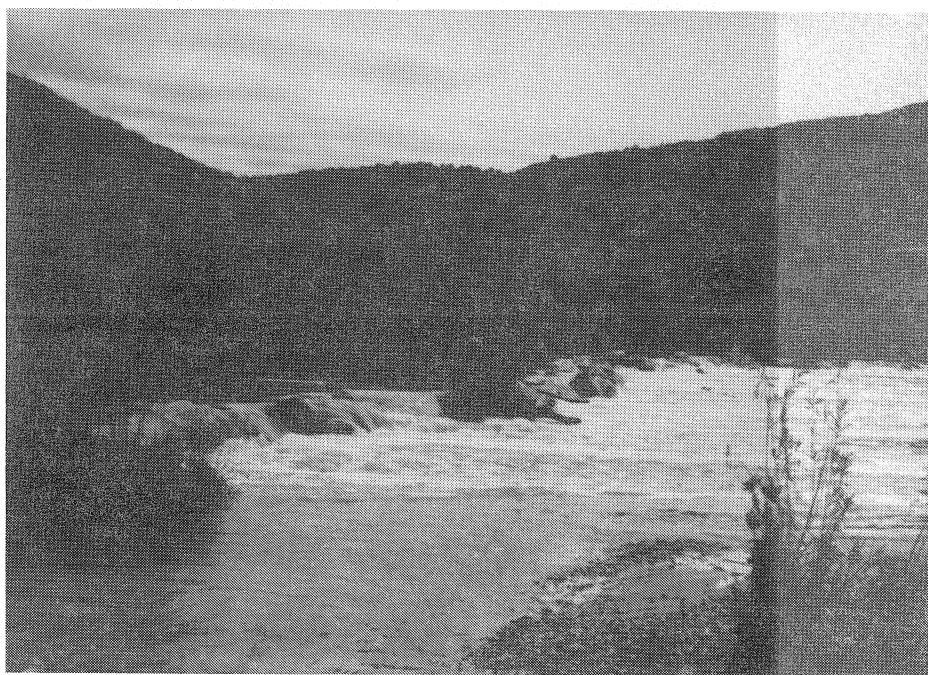
Mile 67.0 - Elevation 3,160 - The pool ends, and you'll soon paddle by what seems to be an old tree farm on the left. The evenly planted matured evergreens seem oddly, yet pleasantly, out of place. Perhaps you'll run a small rock bar riffle across from this place and another just up from the entrance of Cherry Creek at M.67.8.

Mile 68.0 - Elevation 3,150 - Just prior to M. 68, you'll notice a residence perched on the hill on the right. Cherry Creek enters just below this spot. When the flow is right, you may be approaching the only riffle left that could actually be called a rapid. Cherry Creek Drop is a lengthy two-tiered, mild, yet fun affair. In elevated flow, prudence may dictate a scout because there are trees, banks and some old concrete work to maneuver through. In lower flows, it is just another lil-ol-riff.



~ Mile 64.2 - Sheep Crossing - '93 - Baaa! ~

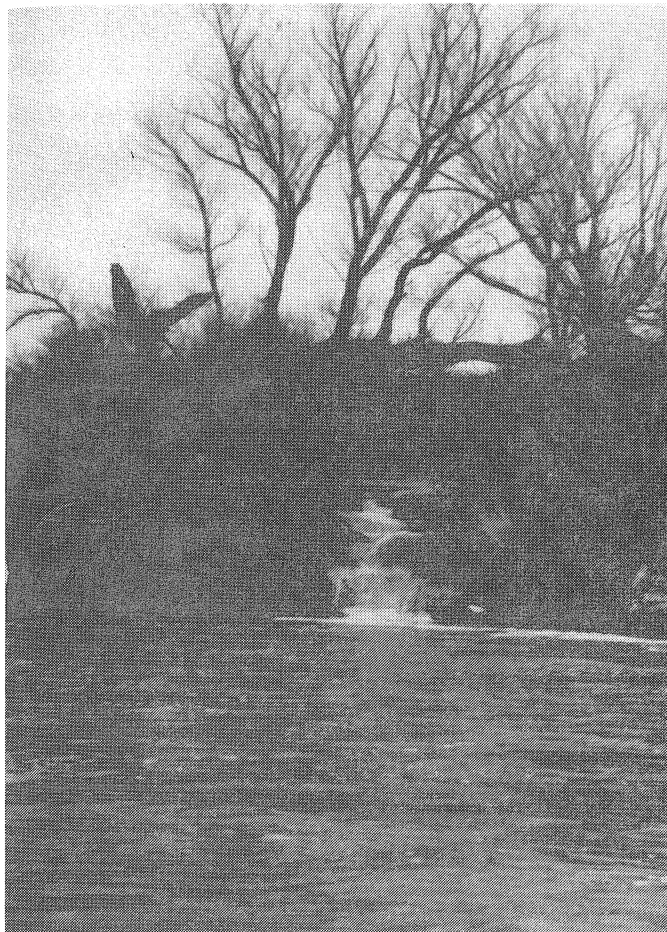
Below Cherry Creek, you'll be entering the historic Cloverleaf Ranch area.



~ Mile 64.9 - What's "O.K." About It? ~

Mile 68.5 - Cloverleaf Island - This is a beautiful area of split channels, pour-over rock bars and dense shoreline growth. Paddlers should be aware of strainers in both the ancestral left channel and the newer right. In elevated flows, some slick paddlework might be required to descend free and clear. The channels merge around M. 69.

Mile 69.0 - Elevation 3,140 - Grandpa Wash enters on the left and the River takes a sharp southern turn. There's no telling what you may encounter here. The Eureka Diversion Dam was wiped out at M. 69.1. However, since it was relied upon for reservation irrigation, one



~ Mile 66.0 - Reclamation? ~

can expect a new obstacle some time in the future. Until that eventuality, paddlers will have easy going through some small riffles and braided channels. At M. 69.6, you enter Yavapai Tribal lands.

Mile 70.0 - Elevation 3,130 - All of M. 70 is relatively straight forward with some possible strainers and small riffles just prior to and at M. 71.0.

Mile 71.0 - Elevation 3,120 - The left shore is still reservation, but at M. 71.1, you touch upon a small corner of public land on the right. I've accessed this place off Horseshoe Bend Road several times for day runs. An old pump and a low level diversion dam mark the spot. As usual, this dam contains mysterious junk. Your best bet is to approach it far right in the event you want to

peel out and line over it.

Near here, you'll see the Aultman Site on the topos. It was a post office to serve the old Conger Mill in the 1880's.

Mile 71.6 - Woods Ditch Diversion Dam. Here's the granddaddy nasty dam of the slew. Woods Ditch should positively not be run. It contains old cars, concrete, piercing rebar and further unmentionable human crap. I've found it safest to go far right into the ditch itself for fifty yards or so, and then slowly line and carry the gear to the free flow below.

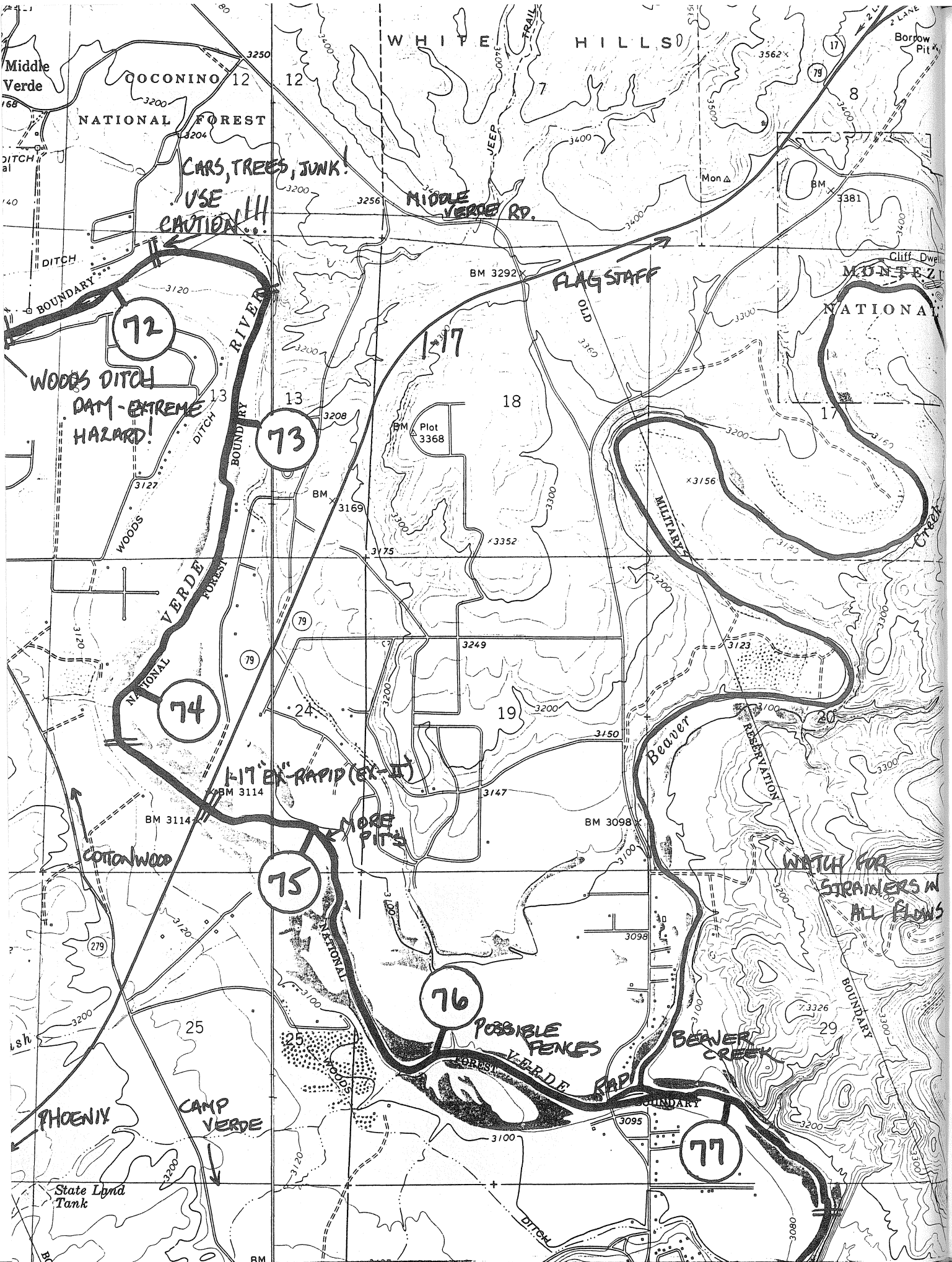
Mile 72.0 - Elevation 3,110 - Here, you are exiting reservation lands and entering another brief touch upon public lands on the left.

Mile 72.1 - This is potentially the most hazardous region of the entire Valley Run. The river plunges first left and then sharply right into a channel with undercut banks, cars, overhanging branches and very pushy current and waves. It can be a downright scary place! I usually avoid it by lining and wading on the right. Also be cautioned at the turn at M. 72.5 because of troublesome strainers in the riffle.

Mile 73.0 - Elevation 3,110 - This is a very flat, sluggish and typically windy mile. Some cars and erosion control deals are placed on the left around M. 73.5,



~ Cherry Creek Drop - Mile 68.0 - 2,000 cfs ~



CARS, TREES, JUNK!
USE CAUTION!!!

WOODS DITCH
DAM - EXTREME
HAZARD!

1-17 EX RAPID (EX-IT)

WATCH FOR
STRAINERS IN
ALL FLOWS

POSSIBLE
FENCES

72

73

74

75

76

77

WHITE HILLS

MIDDLE VERDE
NATIONAL FOREST

MONTICELLO
NATIONAL MONUMENT

BEAVER
RESERVATION

MIDDLE VERDE
RIVER

BEAVER
CREEK

MIDDLE
VERDE RD.

FLAG STAFF

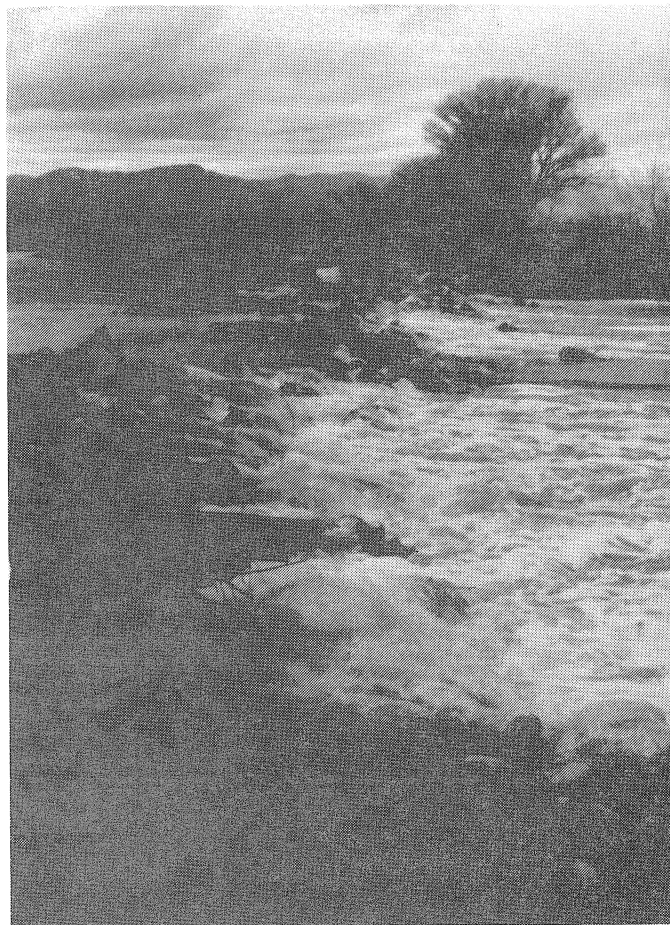
PHOENIX

CAMP
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State Lymd
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Horow Pit
iff Dwellin
FEZU
N A
Creek
RS IN
FLOWS



~ Woods Ditch Damn! - Mile 71.6 ~

but they pose little threat to paddlers. River right is dominated by the American Adventures Verde River Resort, a semi-private and upscale RV establishment.

Mile 74.0 - Elevation 3,100 - After you round the bend, you may encounter a nice small rock bar riffle if the flow is up.

Mile 74.6 - As mentioned earlier, this fun drop has been sadly scoured away — engine roar replaces the rush of rapid.

Mile 75.0 - Elevation 3,090 - This old pits area seems to be reclaiming itself very nicely. It is now a haven for scads of herons, kingfishers, hawks, coots, blackbirds and ducks. Just below M. 75, the serpentine pool ends and you may take a brief plunge through a narrow slot and

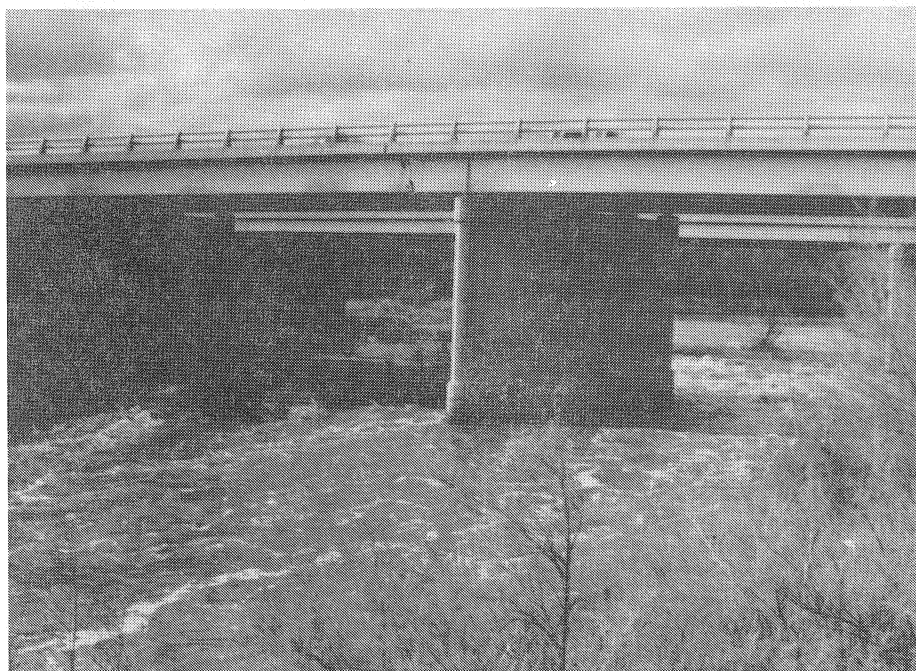
low water ford.

Mile 76.0 - Elevation 3,080 - I enjoy this region. It is surprisingly remote, lush and also teeming with wildlife. Then, however, the reverie ends with houses, more erosion control stuff and some fences to watch for just past M. 76.0. At M. 76.4, you may run a riffle that has a little push into trees.

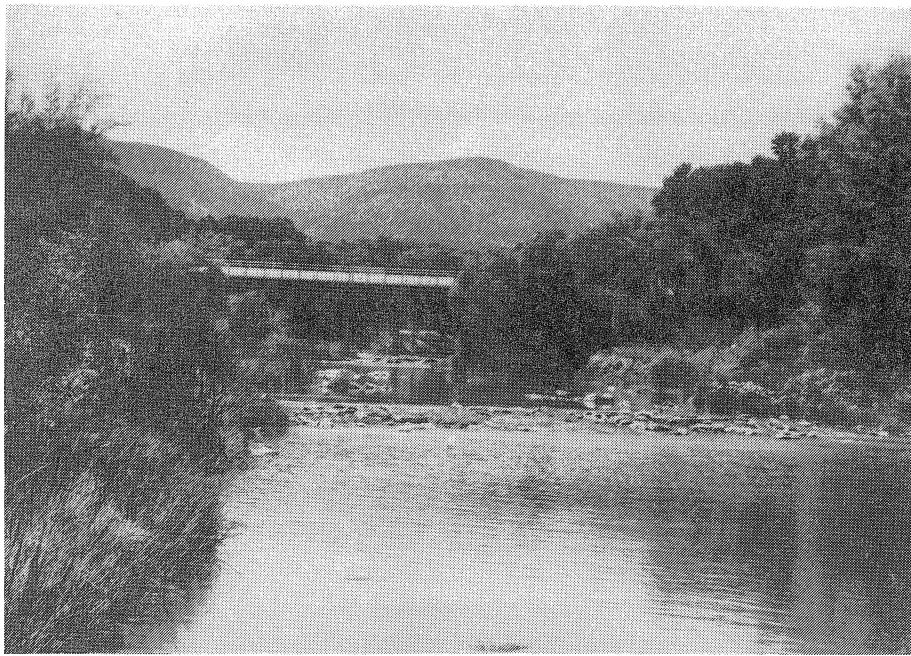
Mile 76.6 - Bridge RAP on the right downstream shore. The trailer park on the left sustained horrific damage during the floods of 1993. Below and just down from the bridge, floaters can expect to run a couple of minor riffles.

Mile 76.7 - Beaver Creek confluence is on the left. Beaver Creek originates from two distinct regions about 35 miles to the north and east. The more northerly arm, Dry Beaver Creek, finds its main source in the Munds Mountain Wilderness Area southeast of Sedona. Wet Beaver Creek gathers steam out of Long Valley, the slopes of Apache Maid Mountain and the Wet Beaver Wilderness Area. Both drainages join just up from Montezuma Castle and become the singular Beaver Creek. Explorations of these virtually pristine Wilderness Areas are highly recommended additions to one's must-do list.

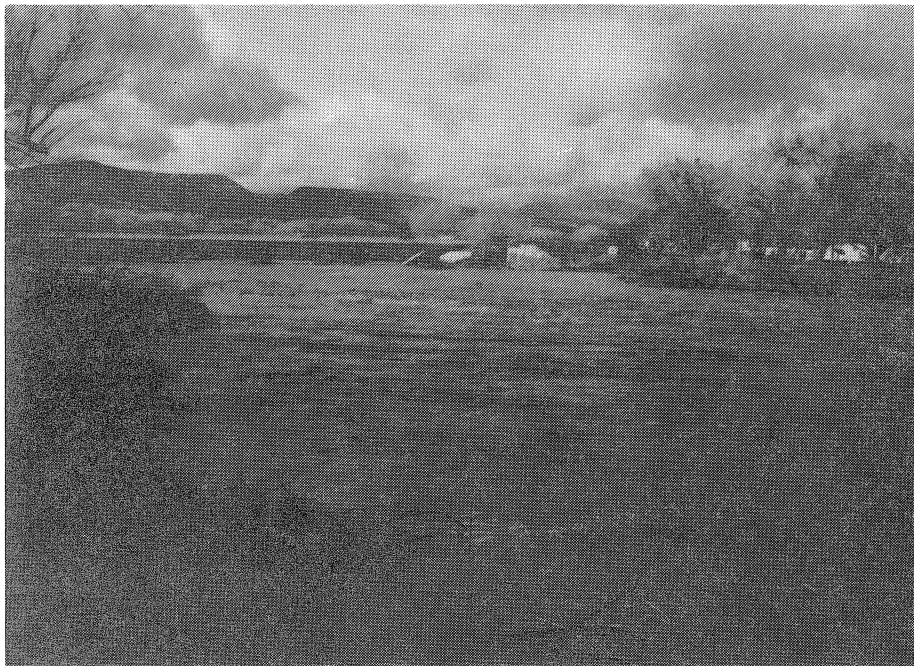
A Short Diversion - I was dumbfounded to even imag-



~ Mile 74.6 - I-17 Drop at about 1,000 cfs - Pre '93 ~



~ Mile 76.7 - Looking Upstream Pre - 1993 ~



~ Mile 76.7 - February 1993 ~

ine the following plan. In 1944, the original CAP (Central Arizona Project) proposal included the building of a dam in Marble Canyon of the Colorado River about 36 miles below Lee's Ferry. From there, a one hundred and thirty-nine mile tunnel (imagine!) was to be bored to bring a steady 3,000 c.f.s. of water to Camp Verde. The Colorado River water would then be freed into the Verde, using the river as a natural diversion ditch to its eventual demise in the impounds near the parched Valley of the Sun.

Ah, the schemes this human race of ours concocts simply never cease to amaze me!

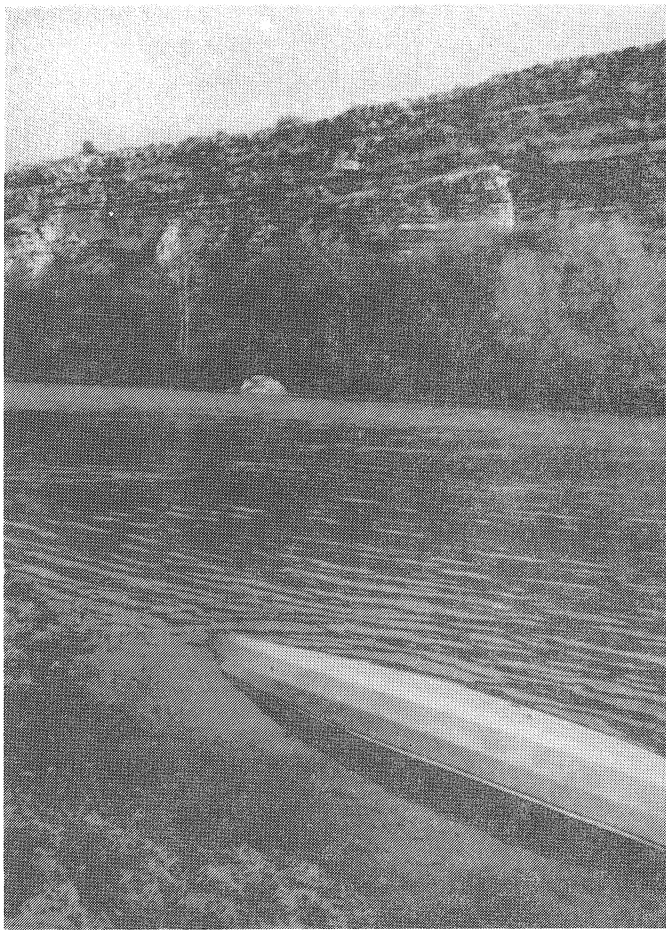
Mile 77.0 - Elevation 3,070 - You are entering a lovely place where the Verde formation hugs the left shore, and one can frequently spot some namesakes of the Creek just above. The left shore is public and uninhabited for the stretch in the shadows of the cliffs. I've enjoyed a couple of final camps near the small drainage at M. 77.2.

Mile 77.5 - The Verde turns gently to the right and you may have to be watchful for some s-turn riffles with strainers. I've been surprised here with some decent sized waves as well. Below this spot, the Verde starts to pool behind the last of the "Valley Run" dams at M. 78.5.

Mile 78.0 - Elevation 3,060 - In this pool, characterized by humble and neat homesites on the right and yet one more pit operation on the left, I had another "Valley Run" highlight. In the early dawn after breaking camp at M. 77.2, I stopped to entertain myself by feeding cracker crumbs to the gaggles of domestic geese and ducks that make this pool their year-round home. A couple of minutes into their feast, they frantically squawked and beelined for shore. Taking their place in the churned up waters were two beautiful river otter. Their curiosity was

instantly quenched when they discovered the frenzy was caused by nothing more than a silly man dispensing soggy saltines, and they dove under and away. I preyed over the pool with camera ready for a full quarter hour, but I did not see them again . . . no picture, but ah, the memories!

Mile 78.5 - The pool ends and you reach the final dam of this run. In fact, it is the last dam until the real thing at Horseshoe, Mile 149. Like Woods Ditch, this

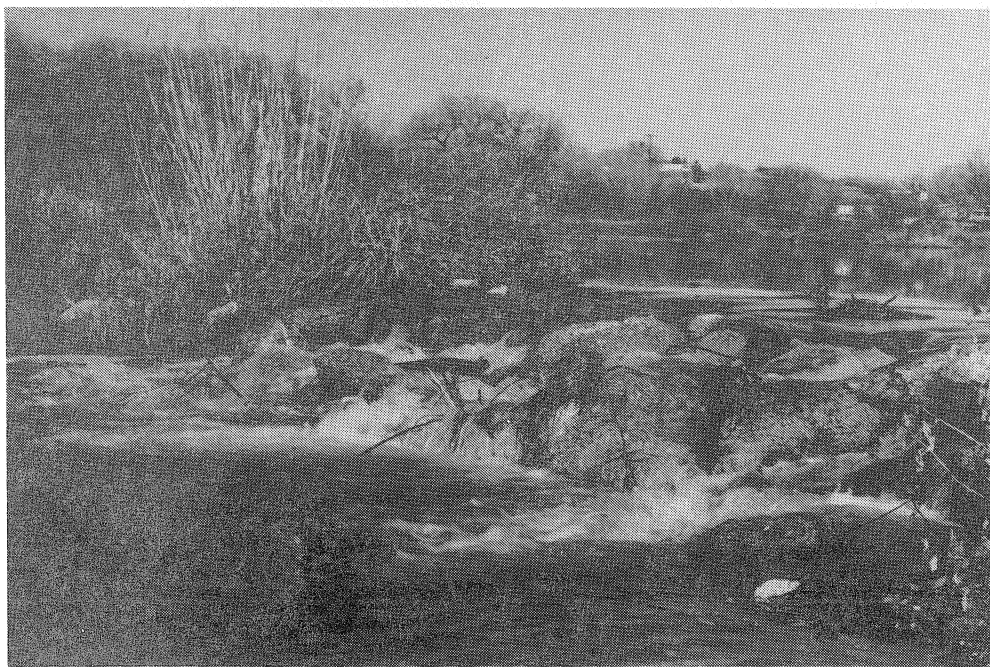


~ Mile 78.0 - One that got away? ~

one should not be run! It is a three-foot drop filled with more junk than your canoe or inflatable should be subjected to. Line it through the right or the center, or paddle a way far left in the ditch itself until you reach a breach in the ditch that can be used to return you and your gear to the main channel.

Mile 78.5 - The remainder of M. 78 is very pretty with some braided channels, lush brush, reeds and tiny riffles — a beautiful finale for your trip!

Mile 79.0 - Elevation 3,060 - Bridge RAP is on the left.

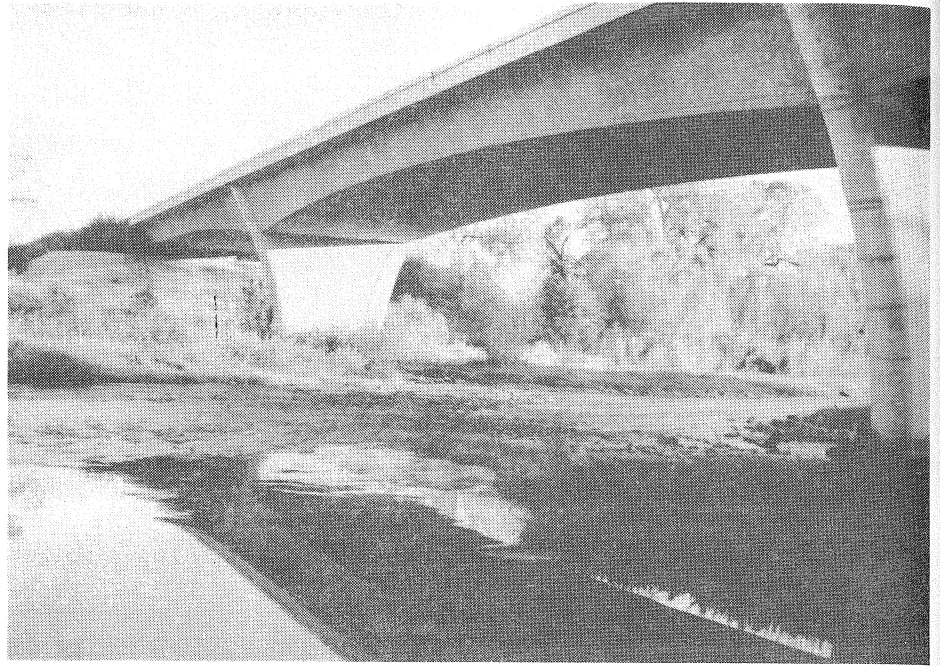


~ Mile 78.5 - The Bad News? A Dam. The Good News? The Last! ~

~Notes~

CAMP VERDE (M. 79.0) TO BEASLEY FLATS (M. 89.0)

- Total River Miles - 10 Miles
- Elevation Drop - 3,060 to 2,960
- Average Drop - 10 feet per mile
- Class - Class I - It should be rated higher (1+ to 2) during high water.
- Topo Maps - Camp Verde and Horner Mountain
- Shuttle Time - One hour
- Days Needed - Two hours to two days. During normal flow (+-200 cfs), this will take the better part of the day.



~ Mile 79 - Pre-February, 1993 Floods ~

RIVER ACCESS POINTS ~RAPS~

Camp Verde (M. 79) - Please refer to the preceding chapter.

FR 574 - Proposed Clear Creek RAP (M. 84.5) - At M. 84.5, 6.3 miles from highway 260, there is a small RAP on public lands. This is just up from the confluence with Clear Creek. In 1995, the Forest Service, in conjunction with other agencies, completed the development of two primitive canoe-in campsites at this spot, providing a dandy layover for the rare overnights on this stretch.



~Mile 79 - February, 1993 - Receding Floodwaters ~

Beasley Flats Recreation Area (M. 89) - Take the General Crook Highway 260 South from Camp Verde for about a quarter mile until you see Salt Mine Road on the right. Take Salt Mine Road, FR 574 and FR 334 for 11.5 miles to Beasley. Small signs and Forest Service signs should help you along the way. The dirt por-

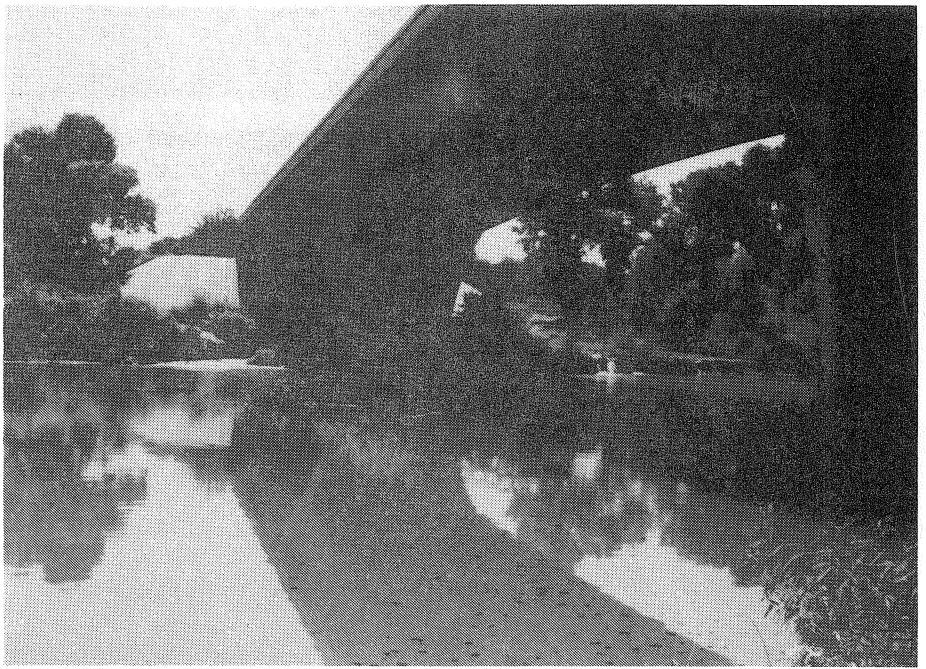
tions can be very sloppy when wet, but normally passable by two-wheel vehicles.

Other RAPS - Most of the other RAPS are on private land and should therefore only be used for emergency purposes or with the consent of the property owners.

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS, HIGHLIGHTS AND CAUTIONS

So much of this run has changed since the destructive rampage of early 1993, so floaters are wise to trust more upon their judgment than the notes upon these pages. Channels have changed – as they will forever be prone to do – and natural obstacles awaiting to mishap the unaware can rear their presence in changing places as well. Trust in only what you see while on the run, and not on what you've heard from others or experienced yourself on previous trips. Through these soft floodplains, the Verde is like a craftsman who from day to day never quite creates the exact same piece.

High water strainers can turn this rather calm, popular run into a beginner's problem. Be Careful! Only experienced floaters should run this stretch during elevated flows (+ -1,000 cfs).



~ Mile 79 - Post Flooding Rebound ~

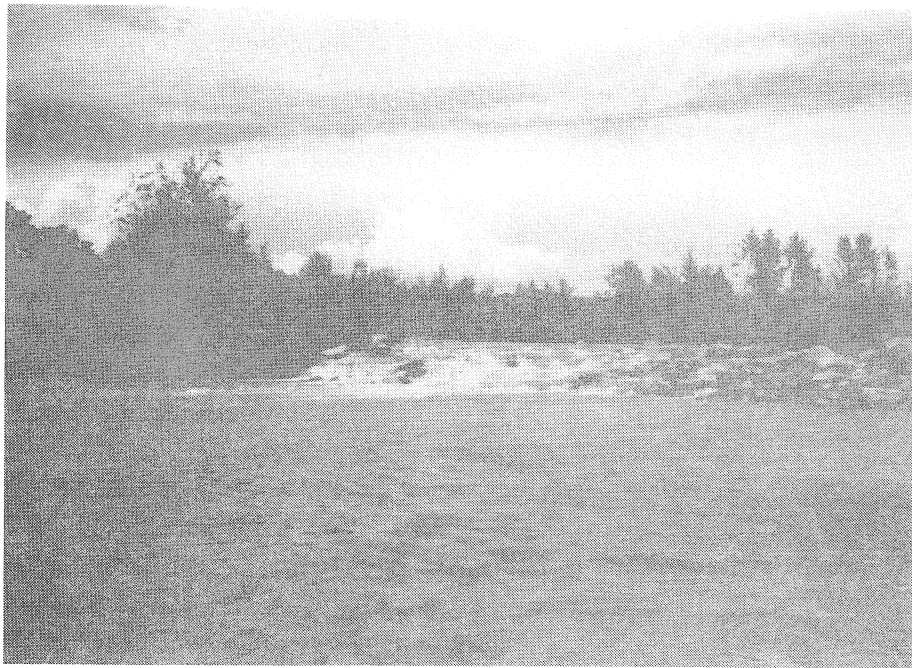
Wrapping on a midstream strainer is a real possibility. High water will also make scouting channels difficult as the Verde flows widely among the trees and brush. Be cautious and hug the insides of bends whenever you may be doubtful about your course.

The only rapids to speak of may be found at Clay Banks (M. 81.2) and at Roller Uno (M. 88.3). Please see the River Mile Log.



~ Mile 81.3 - 3,000 cfs - Highwater Labyrinth ~

~Notes~



~ Mile 81.2 - Clay Banks Rock Garden ~

Below Clear Creek, you may encounter a potentially dangerous undercut bank at M. 85.8. Again, please see the Log.

With few exceptions, private lands dominate the shores from M. 79 to M. 88. If you plan to camp before Beasley, try to find a relatively remote spot, leave with more garbage than you came with, and go in peace. Then chances are you will quietly contribute to keeping the goodwill flowing freely between floaters and owners on this increasingly popular and populated stretch of the Verde.

One must-see stop is the confluence of West Clear Creek. It is indeed the natural highlight of this section. A lot of water may join force with the Verde as Spring run-off and periodic thunderstorms cascade from the Rim country. It is a lush and enticing spot for reverie and exploration. Be aware, however, that both banks of Clear Creek are, you guessed it, privately owned ranch lands.

All of the Camp Verde and Verde Valley region is brimming with cultural, natural, pioneer and military history. Try to set some time aside

to take it in.

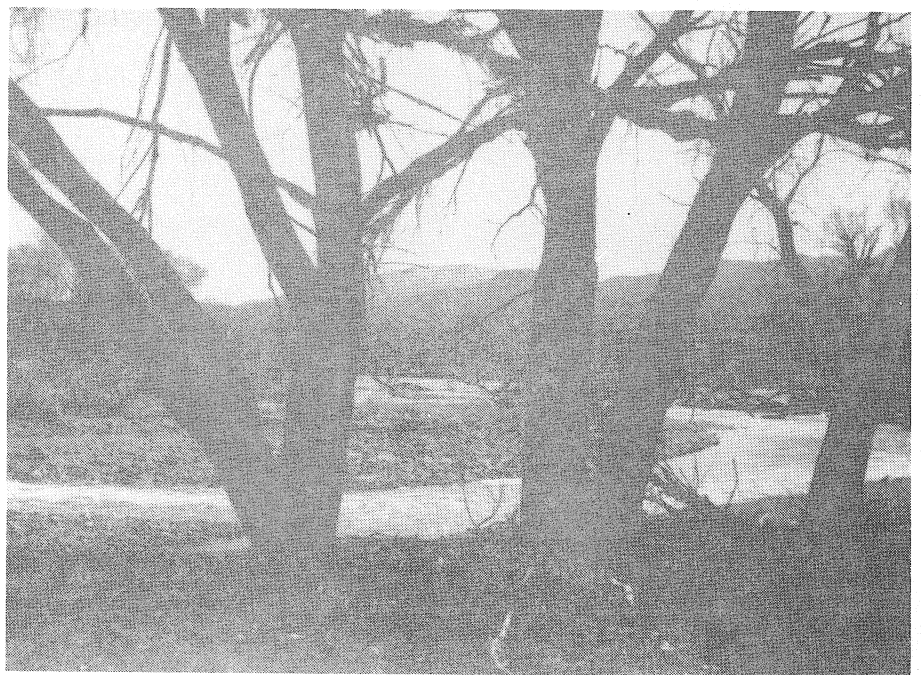
All in all, this ten-mile section is a Class I float. However, don't be misled by the rating. The Verde is a squirrely river even though it carries a relatively civilized posture through here. The Camp Verde to Beasley run attracts many inexperienced paddlers because it is a floater-friendly place most of the time.

Please call ahead about the flow or inquire locally with the Forest Service, be ultra cautious with kids, wear your PFDS, don't overload your boat, know the basic strokes, get an early start, watch the weather, bring extra clothing in dry bags, stay together, hold off the juice and know

when to say "uncle" if you are in over your head. Be careful and enjoy!

~RIVER MILE LOG~

Mile 79 - Elevation 3,060 - As soon as you put in, you'll run a little split channel riffle that can have strainers and some noteworthy waves during elevated



~ Mile 85.0 - West Clear Creek ~

FOREST

NATIONAL

PERSO

Camp Verde
(BM 3147)

Camp Verde
Sch

LOWER
CAMP VERDE
IND RES

SALT MINE RD

HAZARDOUS DAM!

HIGHWAY 260

CHILDS AND
PAYSON

WATCH FOR STRAINERS
IN ALL FLOWS

CLAY BANKS (+)

FOREST

BOUNDARY

Clear Creek
Cem

Clear

Cottonwood
Spring

JEEP
Allen

Squaw Peak
Tank

78

79

80

81

82

83

84

RIVER

RAP

Camp Verde
Ranger Sta

Camp Verde
MANSIP

MILITARY

RESERVATION

BOUNDARY

VERDE

RAP

31 3200

3222

3100

3200

3300

3400

6

5

4

3075

3060

3052

BM 3096

BM 323

3040

3040

3100

3160

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3600

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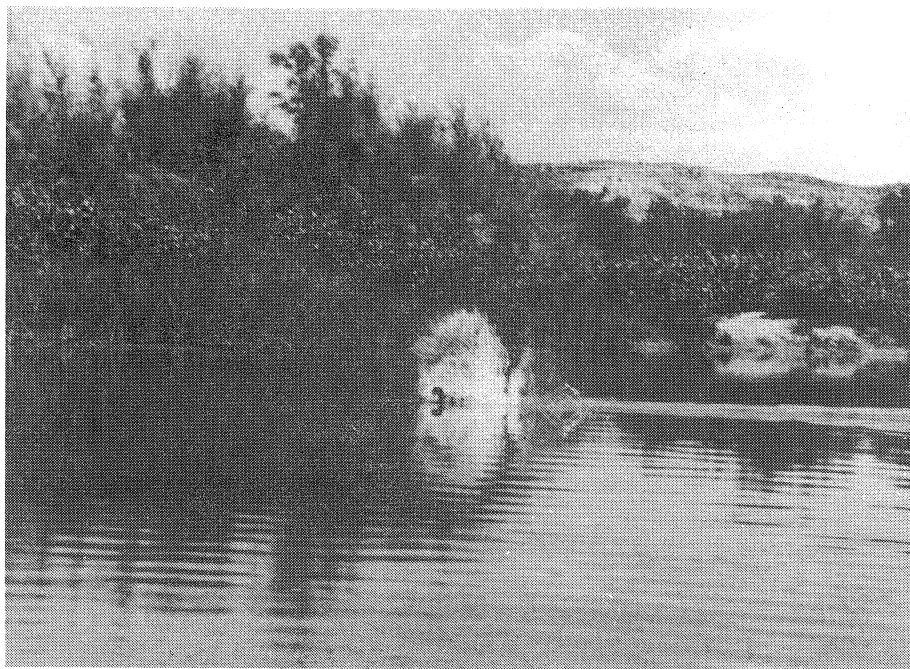
3020

3100

flows. Center left is usually the clearest through this Bridge Rif.

Mile 80.0 - Elevation 3,050 - The Verde slows and you paddle through a lush area where beaver may be seen at work. At M. 80, you may run a small riffle where the Verde jogs into a right turn. The erosion control thingamajiggies on the right pose a threat only during very high water.

Around M. 80.6, the Verde again splits and you pick and choose among small riffles and channels. High flow strainers are especially common from here to Mile 84.



Mile 81.0 - Elevation 3,040 - Ryal Canyon enters inconspicuously on the right at about M. 81.1. Just below there, you'll run the Clay Banks Rock Garden. Approaching Clay Banks (so named because of the formation on the right) you may have to negotiate through a myriad of split channels.

In low water, there is a fun drop into a lovely pool. Run center right for the clearest passage. During higher flows, you may wish to cut inside left to avoid the pushy flow toward the Clay Banks. The pool

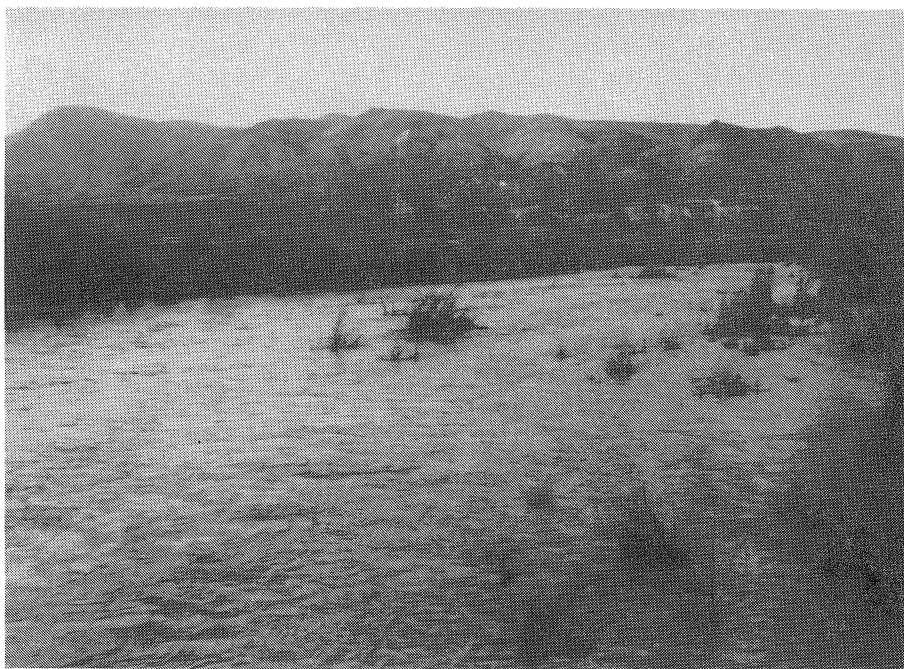
~ The Beavertail Whomp - Mile 79.8 ~

below this drop continues for about a half mile until you reach the huge house on the left near M. 81.6. What a piece of Verde real estate!

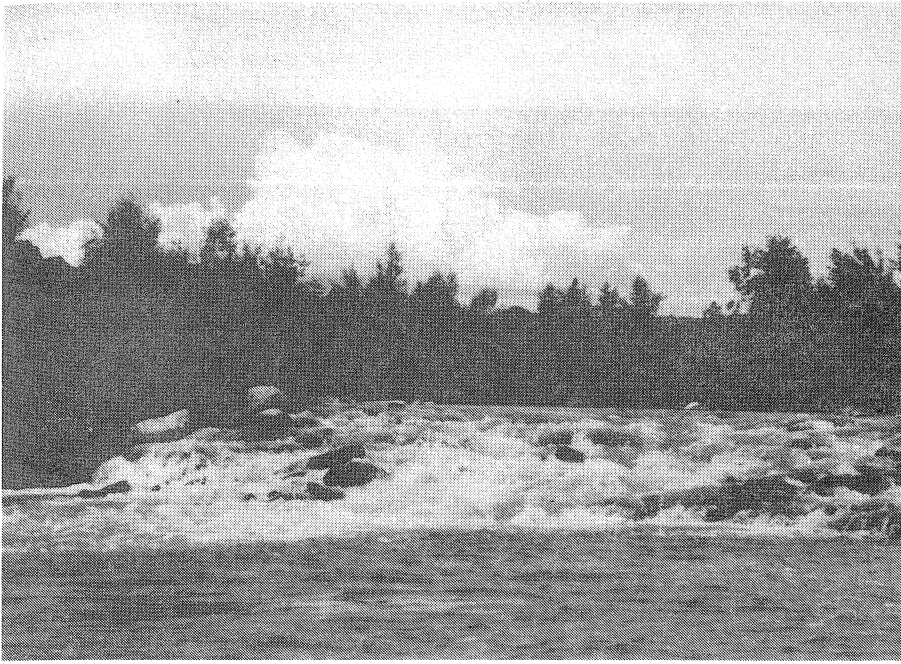
Mile 82.0 - Elevation 3,030 - I refer to this spot as "Plantation Pool." Below the "Plantation," the river winds through a mess of split channels that can make floaters very anxious during higher flows. I've found the clearest route normally to be left of center. When you've negotiated this array of debris, you'll settle

into another slack pool. On your right at M. 82.2 is a great treehouse that must be the envy of every youth in the neighborhood. The pool ends near M. 82.3, and you must snake through another area of small split passages. Clear going then awaits until a bit past M. 83.0.

Mile 83.0 - Elevation 3,020 - Where the Verde turns abruptly south near M. 83.2, you'll likely run a little chute with waves and trees to watch for. Immediately below this spot, you may see two noteworthy and polar-opposite things in succession on your left - natural springs and travertine, and man-made irrigation recharge - more in the category of subtle contrasts found up and down



~ Mile 79.0 - Looking Downstream During Floods ~



~ Mile 81.2 - Clay Bank Rock Garden at +/- 200 cfs ~

the length of this waterway.

Near the end of Mile 83, you'll paddle by new erosion control engineering, an old mass of concrete and the entrance to Squaw Peak Canyon.

Mile 84.0 - Elevation 3,010 - Below M. 84.0, the Verde is in an especially intriguing phase of early and confused channel realignment following the Floods of 1993. The power of scour breached the right banks in

several places, and floaters now must thread through trees and rivulets into the new right channel around M. 84.2.

Mile 84.5 - This public RAP right off the Salt Mine Road provides easy access for folks who wish to halve this run or pull out early for whatever reason.

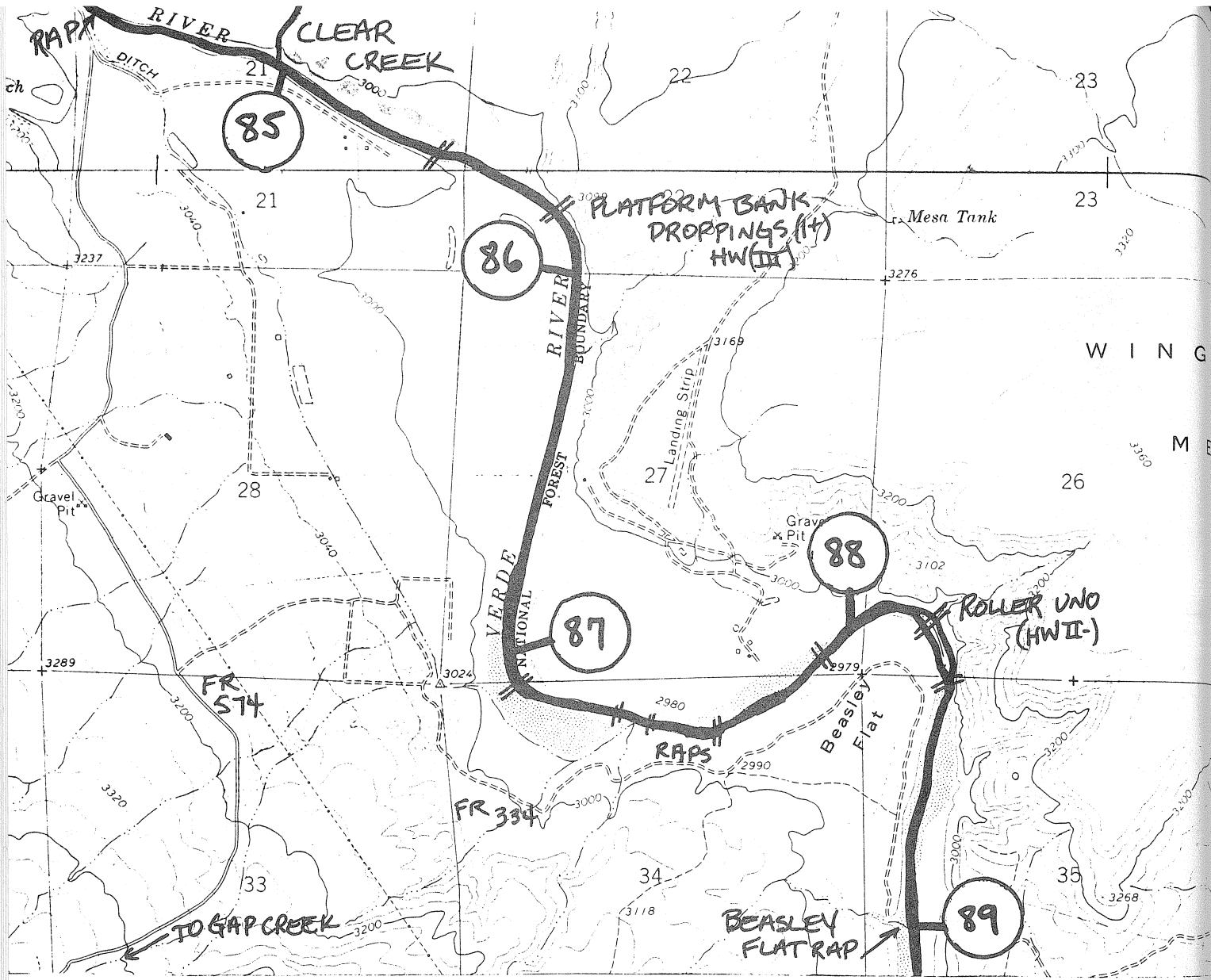
Mile 85.0 - Elevation 3,000 - Wonderful West Clear Creek enters on the left. Pull over above the confluence at the majestic stand of cottonwoods for your best look around. This spot marks the southern boundary of the thirty-plus-mile-long Verde Valley region.

West Clear Creek originates about thirty miles east northeast from here in the Mogollon Rim Country about halfway between Morman Lake and Payson. Hikers who venture into the Clear Creek Wilderness Area tell of rugged trails (or no trails at all) along the creek that require frequent swims to continue. For information about trailheads, conditions and cautions, contact the Forest Service Headquarters in Camp Verde.

~Notes~



~ Mile 81.6 - "Plantation Pool" ~



~"Good Ride" -Mile 101.1~

Springtime boaters will more often than not witness West Clear Creek truly emulating its name as the crystalline hue of its waters help replenish the spirit of the river after the Verde's long and burdensome trek through the Verde Valley Region.

At lower flows, paddlers may knock over rocky reminders of Clear Creek floods; otherwise the Clear Creek riffle is a straight-away affair with no current obstructions.

Mile 85.8 - After Clear Creek, you may run a series of small riffles and split channels around M. 85.5. After you've passed through that spot, you are wise to paddle to the right shore for a glance at the "Platform Bank Riffle" at M. 85.8. Unaware and/or unskilled boaters have capsized in this riffle, especially during deceptively benign low flows. The bank below the platform is undercut and most of the flow goes there. Stay inside this right turn even if it means a grating run on the rock bar. If you do happen to run broadside into the undercut, remember to lean into the wall and you'll likely flush away and free. Leaning away or upriver will surely spell a spill.

Higher flows may bury the cut and cause less concern here. UPDATE: See the end of this chapter for an



~ Mile 84.3 - Verde Channels in Transition ~
update on new hazards here!

Mile 86.0 - Elevation 2,990 - From here to M. 87, you'll find a straightforward and easy going southerly stretch of river.

Mile 87.0 - Elevation 2,980 - Here the Verde swings east. Except at higher flows, all of the water goes left. A new right channel is at work here, possibly creating an island in years to come. Watch for overhung trees around M. 87.1.

From this river bend until M. 88.0, you'll have some fun rock-dodging in riffles during low flow, or some quick times in the friendly waves of quickened flow.

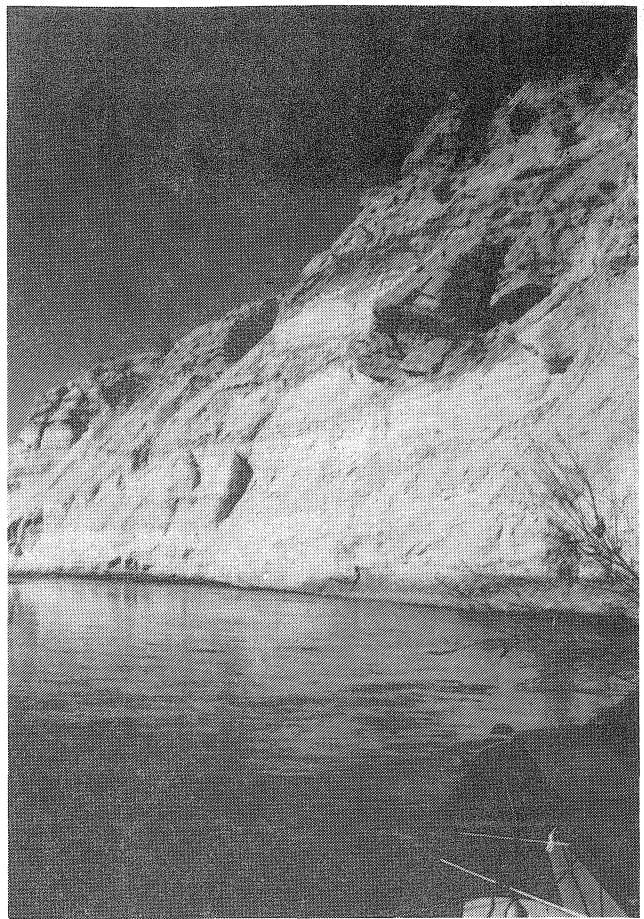
Mile 87.6 - Many dirt roads spur off the Beasley Road between Miles 87 and 88. These are good RAPS to begin Beasley to Child's runs if you'd like a little more river time to get comfortable before the Class II-III action begins around Mile 90.6. The river is again choosing a new channel at Mile 87.6, and you can expect to run a mild riffle there as well.

Mile 88.0 - Elevation 2,970 - Just prior to Mile 88.0, you may run a fun little drop. At Mile 88.1, you enter Forest Lands, and from



~ Mile 85.0 - Clear Creek - Verde Confluence ~
67

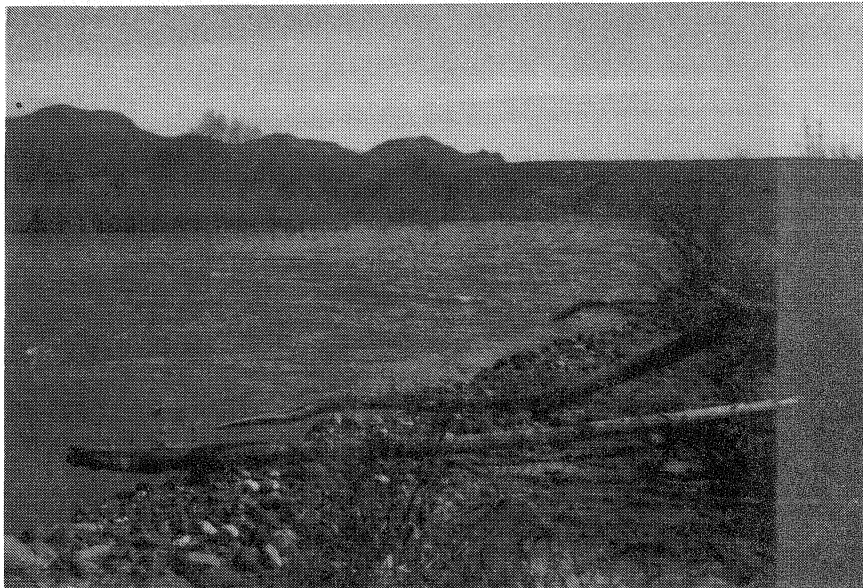
~Notes~



~ Platform Bank Riffle - Mile 85.8 - Pre 1994 ~

here all the way to Horseshoe Lake, there will be relatively few private restrictions. The Verde again belongs to one and all!

Mile 88.3 - As if on cue, the freeborn Verde will occasionally create enough turbulence here to swamp the overloaded and unaware. The clash of water and shoreline at this sharp right turn will bring "Roller Uno" alive during higher flows. Sizable, yet friendly, waves and eddies on the right can make this a fun practice and play spot. Beginning boaters should be mindful to run right or center to avoid the limestone shelves on the left. In lower flows, there is no "Roller Uno."



~ Mile 87.2 ~

Mile 88.5 - In the Verde Formation on your left, you'll no doubt be intrigued by the caves and depressions. Yes, they are ancient cliff dwellings. Exploring them is well worth your time and short climb. Remember, removing anything from sites like these is very illegal.

Great views of Squaw Peak (the geographic center of Arizona), Pine Mountain, Copper Canyon and all of the Beasley Flats area are possible here. These ruins are special perches to just sit and soak in some idea of what life must have been like for the natives who resided here 500 and more years ago.

The last half of Mile 88.0 is normally very sluggish and slow, especially if you've caught the predictable afternoon headwinds in your face.

Mile 89.0 - Elevation 2,960 - Beasley Flat Recreation Area and



~ "Roller Uno" - 3,000 cfs - Mile 88.3 ~

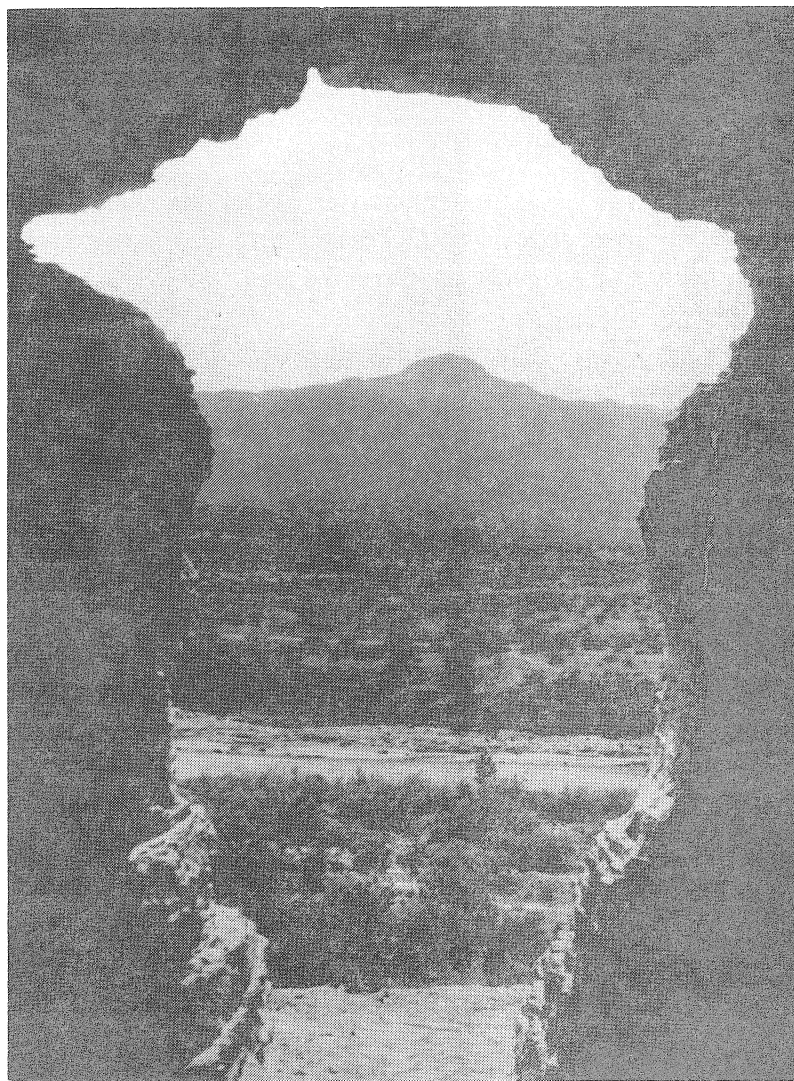
RAP is on your right. Most boating parties choose to end or begin their trips from this RAP. The Recreation Area has been improved to include restrooms, parking, picnic ramadas, information and nice interpretive signs.

The entire area is becoming increasingly popular with all manner of visitors, so please don't let the Verde regret your visit. Take your trash and some of the previous guzzler garbage with you when you go.

Beyond Mile 89 - Do not go beyond Mile 89 unless you are prepared and aware of what the Verde has in store below. Please refer to the next chapter.

UPDATE ON MILE 85.8 - Platform Bank Riffle is now drastically changed. Several large boulders cleaved from the cliff, and one of them now rests smack dab in the main channel. I suggest you scout this spot during your first time down to prevent any pins or mishaps.

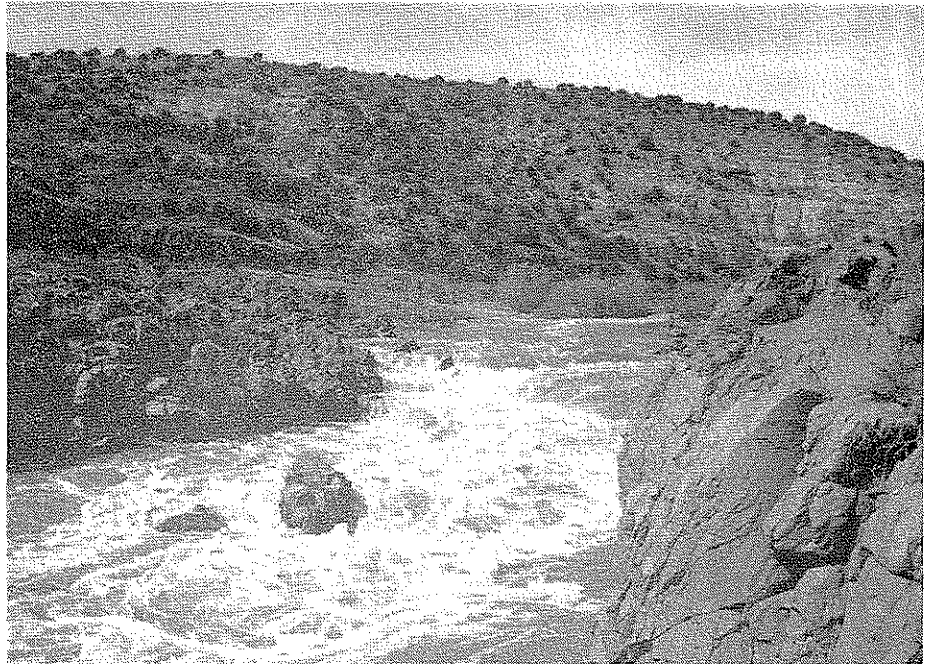
I checked on this new feature less than a month after the rockfall and noticed the river already cutting into the soft rock. Chances are it may not be too many seasons before this obstruction withers away.



~ Mile 88.5 ~

BEASLEY FLATS (M. 89) TO CHILDS CAMPGROUND (M. 106.5)

- Total River Miles - 17.5
- Elevation Drop - 2,960 to 2,620
- Average Drop - 20 feet per mile
- Class II/III+ - The Falls area is classed higher during flows above 1,000 cfs
- Topo Maps - Horner Mountain, Hackberry Mountain, Tule Mesa, and Verde Hot Springs
- Shuttle Time - 4 to 6 hours
- Days Needed - One to two or more.



~The Falls - Mile 91.4 - 2,000 cfs ~

From the river, floaters are free to explore around here only from June 15 to December 1st. Check the River Mile Log for more on The Falls area.

RIVER ACCESS POINTS ~RAPS~

Beasley Flats (M. 89) - FR 574 - Please refer to the previous section.

Falls Road (M. 91) - Take the Crook Highway 260 seven miles from Camp Verde to the Childs/Fossil Creek (FR 708) on your right. Travel down the road for one mile and turn right on FR 500. If you see the Forest Service bulletin board, you have the correct turnoff. Take the road for 2.5 miles until you reach a wash and a gate on the far side. This gate is locked from December to June. Proceed for 1.5 miles until you reach The Falls overlook. There is no vehicle access past here. This RAP should be used by vehicles for emergency purposes only. It is imperative that river runners rise above others who would use and abuse protected areas like this. The eagles are nesting, and guardians prepared to cite you are watching.

Gap Creek - Brown Springs Ranch (M. 97) - From Camp Verde, take Salt Mine Road (FR 574). Follow it the same as you would to Beasley. At the left turn to Beasley (and Forest sign), continue straight on FR



~ Falls Road Notice ~

574 for 7 miles. When you cross Gap Creek itself, you are very close to the parking spot. You'll see a locked gate and buildings belonging to Brown Springs Ranch. This is private, and you don't need to add your presence to their long list of intruders.

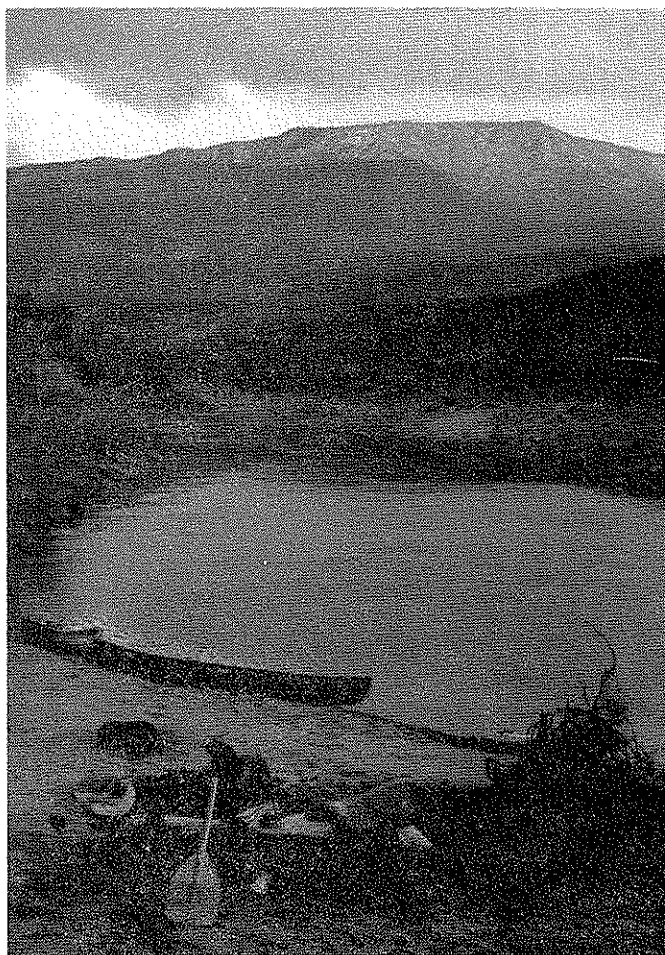
The Verde is one-half mile below. You must carry all of your gear from here. It is impossible and illegal to do otherwise. Note: FR 574 is slow and rough in places. In poor weather, even four-wheelers will have sloppy travels.

Mile 105.2 - Private.

Verde Hot Springs - No vehicular access.

Childs Community - FR 502 - Private. Bother them only in emergency situations.

Childs Campground (M. 106.5) - Take the Crook Highway 260 from Camp Verde for 7 miles to the Childs/Fossil Creek Road. It is 23 miles to the River. The road is good during clear weather. However, rains can make this scenic and sometimes steep road sloppy and scary. Inquire with locals if you are shuttling during iffy weather.



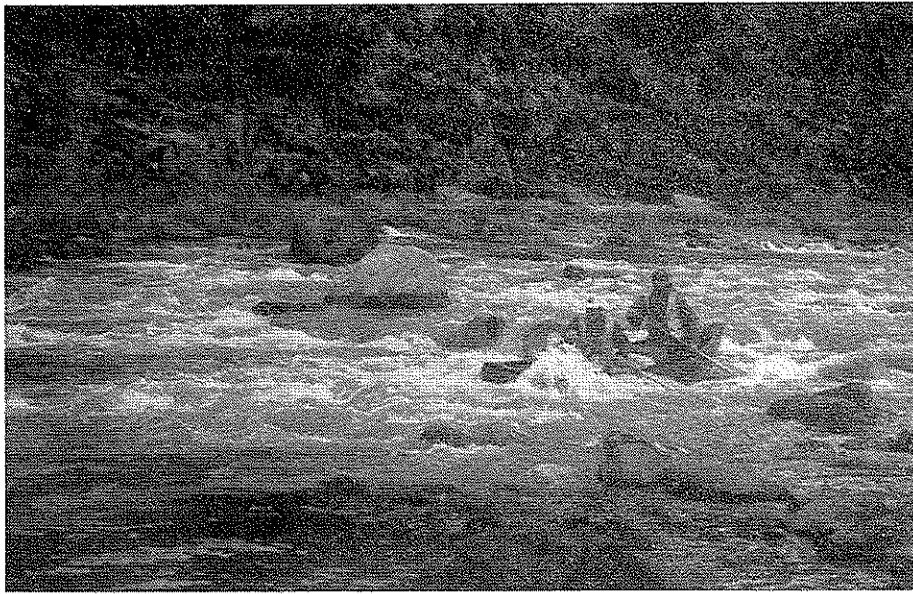
~Looking Downriver to Brown Springs and Pine Mountain - Mile 96.2 ~



~ Verde Hot Springs - Mile 105.6 ~

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS, HIGHLIGHTS AND CAUTIONS

This is the whitewater run of the Verde. This is the beginning of the designated Wild and Scenic stretch. This is where the Verde Falls are found. This is where the river gorge deepens again. This is where eagles dare. This is the place many floaters get hooked by the Verde magic. This is a magnificent 18 miles in the heart of arid Central Arizona that reels in river-runners from everywhere when spring thaws peak. This is where the Verde shakes its bondage and reasserts its desire for peace. This is where we are humbled. This is where the Verde asks us to be quiet and appreciative guests.



~ Ed and Jeff in "Two-Rock Drop" - Mile 93.5 ~

On the other paddle, this is not a stretch for novices. Please choose a Verde Valley run to cut your teeth on moving water. I have seen many wrecked boats, witnessed inflating concerns and fear and heard many stories of hardship and emergency. Down here, one must be prepared and in the company of other knowledgeable boaters.

The Verde Falls area will be discussed in the River Mile Log section at Mile 91.

From December 1st to June 15th, all camping, exploring, traffic, noise, foolishness, etc., is restricted from miles 91 to 93 due to federally protected bald eagles. Perhaps this should be in effect all year! Floaters are allowed only routine scouting, lining and portaging where necessary.

After floods and prolonged high flows, trees and debris can be found lodged in very inopportune places.

Multiple drops and rapids require scouting, so all in all, this is not recommended as a day run except for those very acquainted with the Verde.

If in doubt, please scout!

Happily, the only private lands you

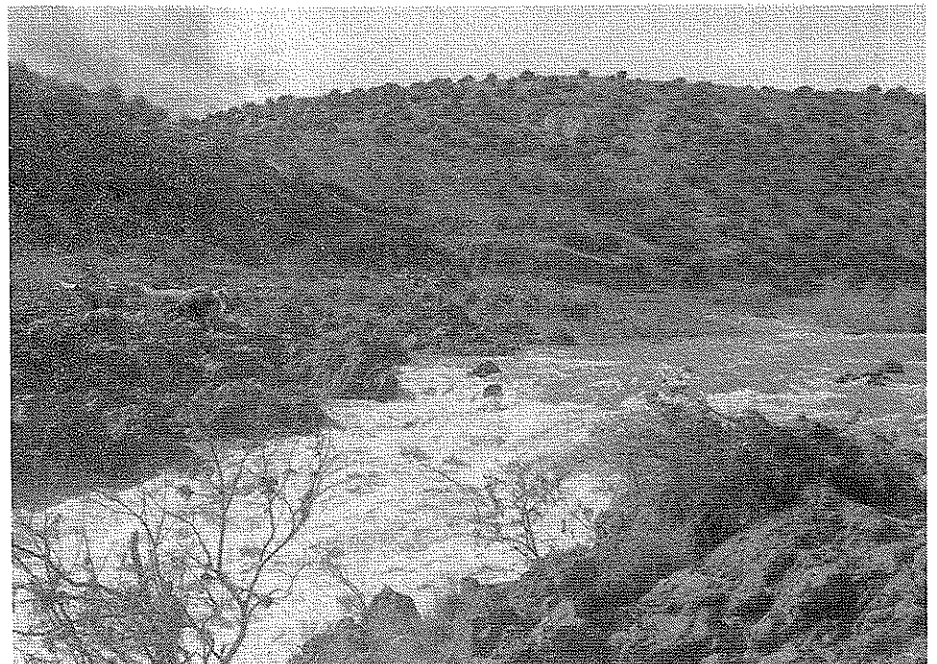
will encounter are small parcels at Gap Creek, a homestead at M. 105.2 and Childs Community.

Sycamore is one of the several beautiful canyons that terminate at the Verde along this run. Below Sycamore and the closure boundary, you'll find plentiful camping on the left shore.

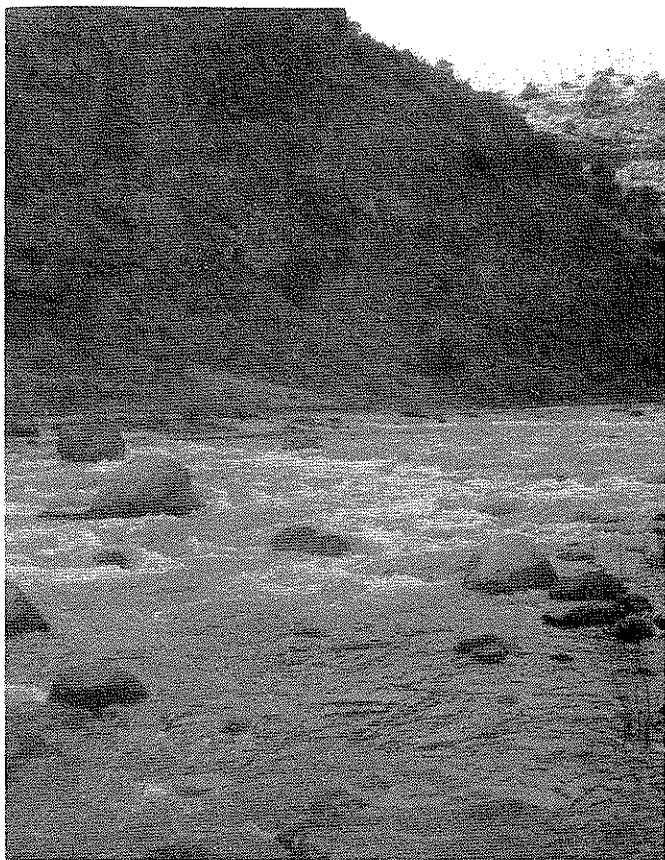
The Pine Mountain Wilderness area and the Verde Rim dominate the western skyline for much of this run. Views are magnificent, and many creeks flowing down the opposite slope of the rim beckon to be hiked

(including yet another Sycamore). Access to the Wilderness Region is off I-17 and Dugas/Orme Interchange between Cordes Junction and Cherry Road. It is 25 miles to the Pine Mountain trailhead. Most of the miles are rugged and dang near impassable when wet. The rim serves as a continental or regional divide, if you will. All waters east flow to the Verde, and all waters west flow eventually to the Agua Fria. A good spring season provides scenery unmatched as creeks cascade, flowers bloom and grasses reach for the skies.

Below White Flash Rapid are a couple of splendid river miles with turns, walls, color, character, and



~ The Falls at 4,000 cfs ~



~ Mile 93.2 - Near Sycamore Canyon ~

some nifty attention-getting drops.

Ruins can be found by those floaters who take time to explore the numerous side canyons.

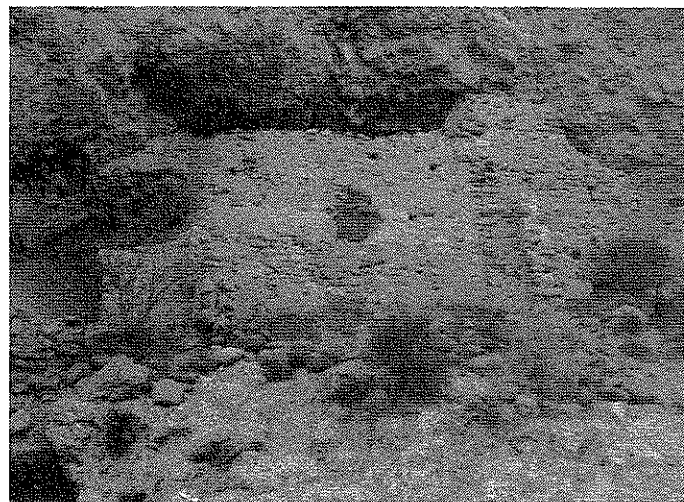
Common headwinds between miles 101 and 106 can slow you and tire you near the end of your trip.

Verde Hot Springs is a must-do at least once. See the River Mile Log for more about expecting the unexpected here.

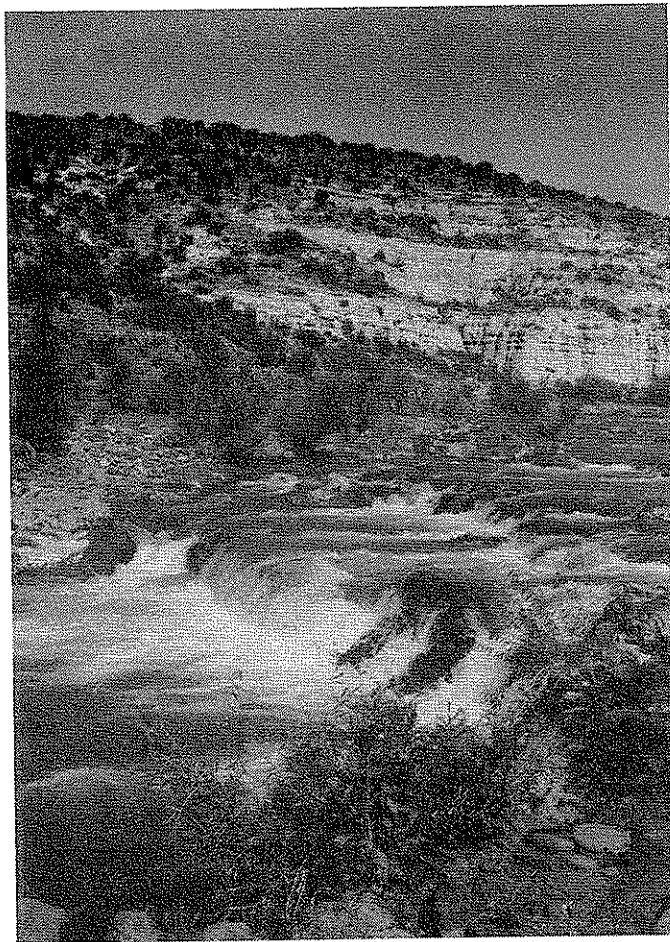
What floaters will encounter down here depends entirely on the flow of the Wild and Scenic Verde. It can come up and go down in a matter of hours; or less! So the common question of "what is the c.f.s.?" may be met with close approximations at best even from river rats and SRP gauge guardians. The following are only roughed-out descriptions based on personal experience and excessive calls to the Flowline.

Up to 100 cfs - Rocks surface everywhere but in the pools. Drag-overs are common, and getting hung up midway through drops such as Off-The-Wall, Punk Rock and Bushman is highly probable. Just plan to line over Prefalls and the Falls. Running with this

~ Notes ~



~ A Cliff Dwelling -- best left uncharted ~



~ Prefalls at about 150 cfs ~

flow can be frustrating and tiring, but also fascinating as the river exposes its bed and bowels for the viewing pleasure of the off-season floater.

100 to 200 cfs - Still too many rocks to avoid even for shallow draft crafts. However, there are fewer drag-overs. Tandem or heavily loaded canoes can run at this flow, but expect slow going. Prefalls can be run with a scrape or two, but come back later to hit The Falls unless you like gouges and possibly pointless problems. This is the average off-season flow.

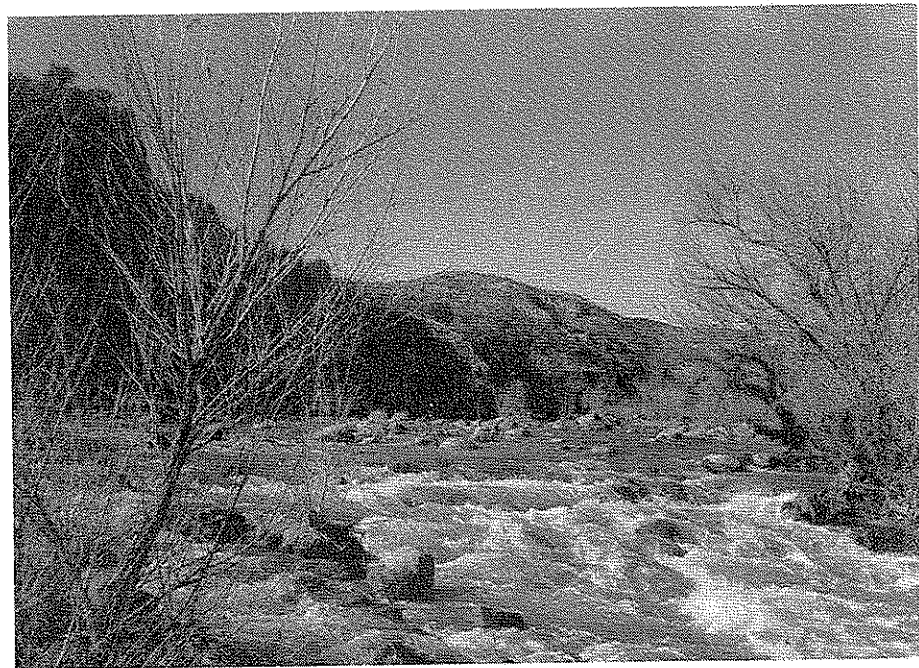
200 - 400 cfs - Here is a nifty range for your first run down here. More rocks are buried, but the river has yet to gain the push that could cause pause with greenhorns. Prefalls can be run with lightened boats and better odds of clean going. Prefalls and The Falls should be done only by experienced paddlers and with com-

panions at the ready from this cfs and higher. All of the named rapids still have their share of rocks that could blow set-ups or kick you over, so scout them well if you are new to this stretch.

400 - 600 cfs - Now we're getting close to the volume where rafts can share the flow. Those little troublesome rocks get washed and some river force and hydraulics appear. Decent paddling skill becomes a necessity. Learning by doing is great philosophy, but it shouldn't be applied by learners down here from this cfs on up the gauge.

600 - 1,000 cfs - Larger rafts can now consider the Verde fun and runnable. Canoes should expect a swift and wet ride. Powerful hydraulics, sizable waves, and required maneuvers in current make this a nifty level for seasoned paddlers. If you choose to run Prefalls, have companions below to help prevent a wrong-side-up entrance into The Falls. The right channel of Prefalls is clear and fun in and of itself. The Falls can be run flush. All named drops should be scouted. Mid river wraps present more serious prospects at these higher flows.

1,000 - 3,000 cfs - The Verde is now bank wide on the flats and very pushy in the drops and chutes. All but heavier rafts will have smooth going. Open boaters can expect to get very wet. The width of the Verde in this high water stage gives boaters more options for "cheating" some rapids. Most small boat floaters



~Upper Bushman -- Around 150 cfs ~

RIVER MILE LOG

Mile 89 - Elevation 2,960 - Beasley Flats RAP.

Mile 89.5 - The river gives you a little time to adjust your trim before you hit the first little drop at 89.5. This riffle turns you abruptly left into a lovely pool.

Mile 90 - Elevation 2,940 - In the vicinity of Mile 90, the Verde begins to leave the flats and approach its canyon country. Some small riffles and strainer-dodging loosen you up for Off-The-Wall.

~ The Falls -- Around 350 cfs ~

should consider skipping The Falls and Punk Rock, and opting for the right channels of Prefalls and Bushman. Be careful at S-Curve and Rocky Split because of the strainers and pushy currents. Wide rocky drops like Sycamore and Childs provide pure dancing enjoyment. Please remember when planning a trip that these increased flows do quicken your pace, but more time is required for scouts and bails, and ports or lines.

4,000+ cfs - Now you and the Verde are in flood stage. Many guide books simply state as a rule that rivers, and especially desert rivers, should not be floated during floods. This is true, but all rules can have exceptions. There are, however, no exceptions to this rule for the inexperienced, or those possessing an over-inflated notion of their abilities.

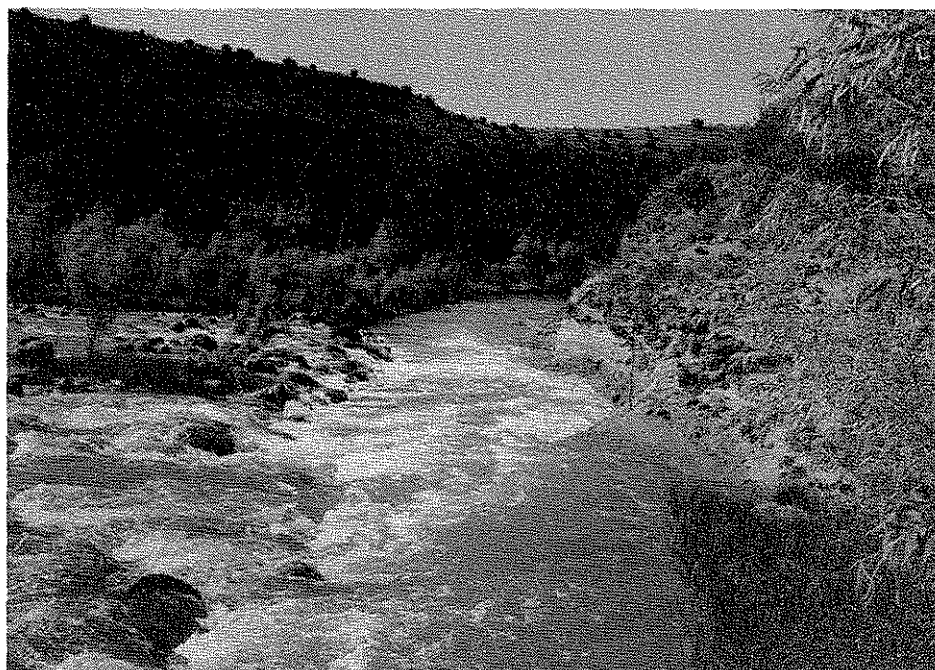
For those who truly know this river and themselves, floating in extremely high flows can be an awe inspiring and humbling experience. The Verde asks you, beckons you and requires you to be cautious, competent, observant, prepared and appreciative, and among company and friends of equal ilk.

Mile 90.4 - Cottonwood Creek enters left.

Mile 90.5 - Paddle over near the right shore as the Verde starts to make a wide right turn. When you hear the rush of rapid, pull over and scout. Here is the Verde's first significant drop in quite a while. If you don't like what you see, consider paddling back to Beasley because Off-The-Wall is an easy Class II compared to many rapids below. The common approach is river right. The flow over the rock bar on



~ Punk Rock -- Around 2,000 cfs (boaters unknown) ~

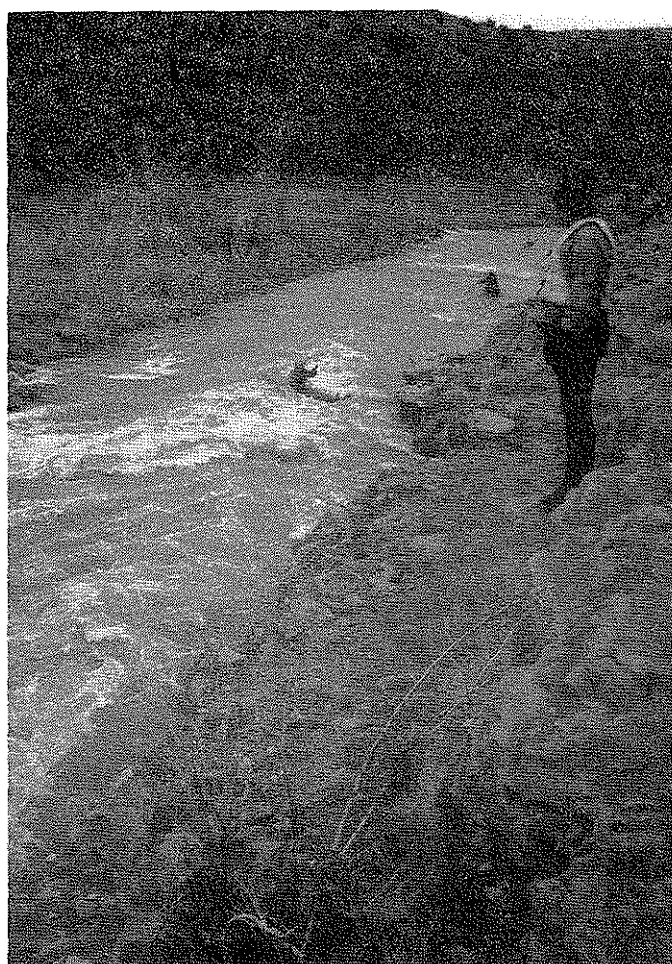


~ Off-the-Wall - 200 cfs ~

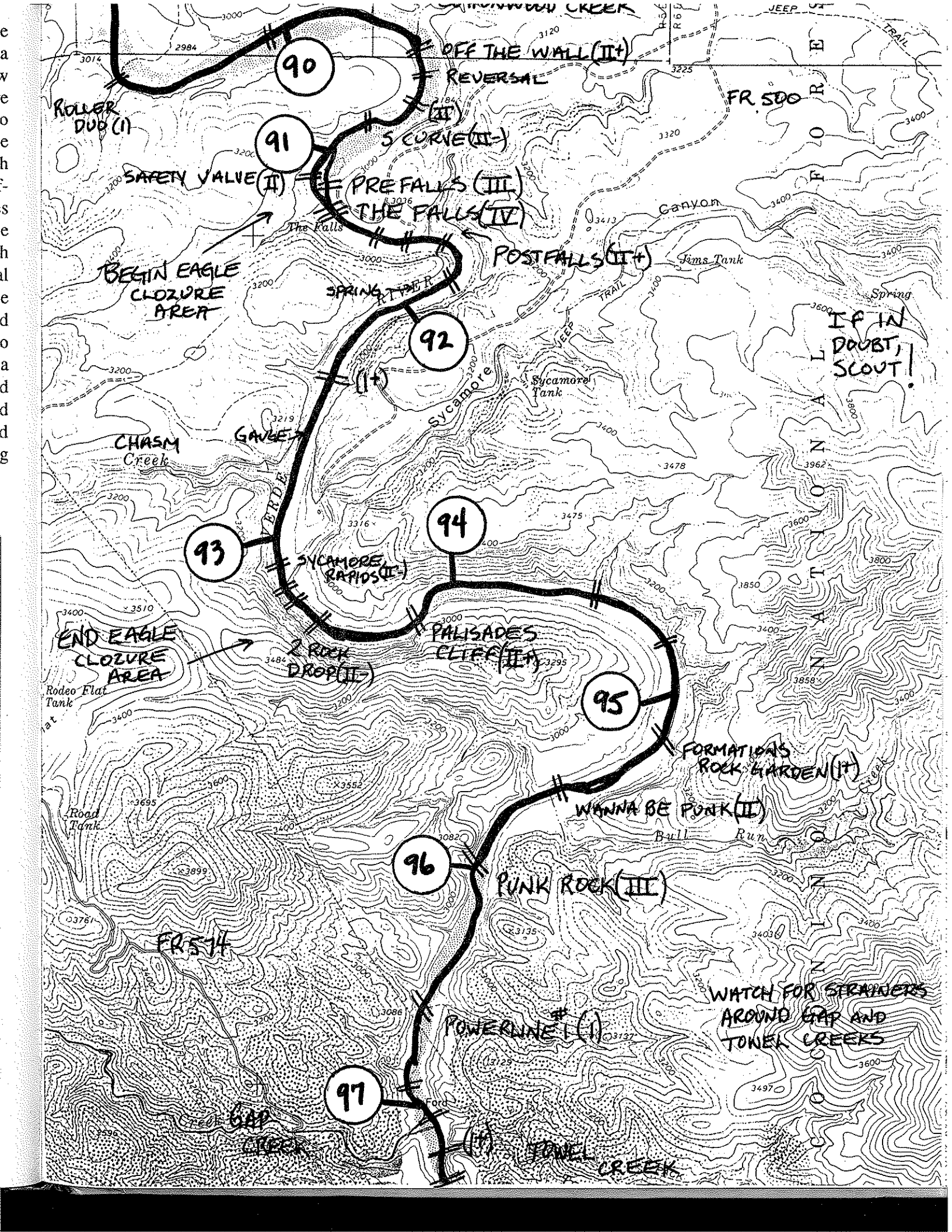
~ Notes ~

the left may force you upon the right wall, so you should plan a left draw stroke or two just below the entrance. In low water, there are a couple of exposed rocks to watch for midway down. Be steady and try to keep in line with the current. In high water, Off-the-Wall lateral waves and holes will try to fill you up. Below the main part of this rapid, in high water, you may find a nasty lateral recirculating hole created by the current clashing with the wall and a submerged ledge. Work left to avoid it or brace well. During a run at 2,000, I inadvertently surfed most of it before it overpowered my downstream lean and dumped

me. If you wish to skip the whole shebang, dragging over the far left part of the rock bar is a safe option.



~ Bob Medlyn scouting and watching boaters in the lower half of Off-the-Wall (about 350 cfs) ~





~ Dog Sal Above "S-Curve" - Mile 90.8 -- 4,000 cfs ~

Mile 90.6 - If you need to bail, you may want to do so before this fairly steep little drop. Nice waves here in elevated flows.

Mile 90.8 - This can be a tricky spot that first-timers are wise to scout. A right scout gives the best look. The "S-Curve" Rapid begins with a sweeping right turn and culminates with a sharp left. Just above this left turn can be some troublesome rocks (low water) or big holes (high water). Work your way left of them to have the proper setup for missing the tree at the bottom right of the rapid. A lot of flow will go into this tree, and I've witnessed boats barely avoiding wraps and pins here.

Large standing waves await at the end as S-Curve energy is dispensed.

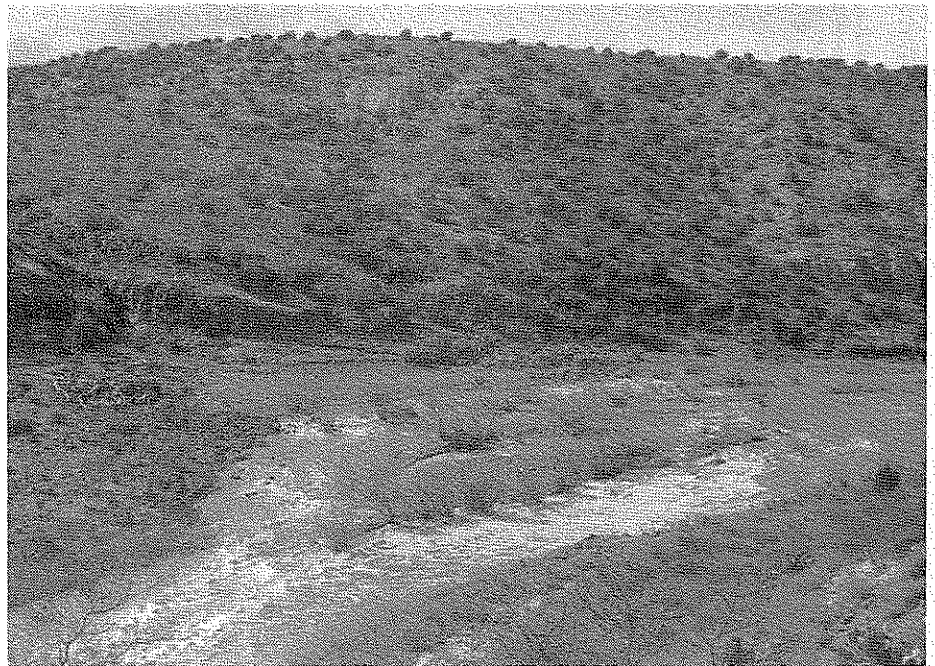
In flows above your comfort level, a cautious course can be found far left through the trees where the push is much less. After this run, it'll soon be time to pull left to scout the Verde Falls region not more than a quarter mile below.

Mile 91 - Elevation 2,920 - Did I mention yet to pull over and scout? Yes, this is a mandatory

caution! Tie up on the left shore as soon as you start to encounter rocky or rippling waters. You'll want to stop well up for the obvious reason of avoiding any chance of getting swept to Prefalls, but also so you'll leave yourself enough time and river to ferry to the right if you decide to shoot the "Safety Valve" right channel.

After you scout, if you decide not to plunge Prefalls, then you are left with either a portage or line, or a right channel run. The right channel runs well around the Prefalls Drop. In fact, you won't even see Prefalls as you descend the nifty and swift "Safety Valve" Rapid.

This channel is the easier way to go, but don't be misled! Challenge awaits in "Safety Valve" as well. You'll have to do some fancy paddle work to avoid rocks and strainers. Don't fill up in here because recovery before the Main Falls may be impossible. Where the channels merge, the current can be severely pushy. You should have discussed a strategy for this spot during your initial scout above. Either ferry to the left shore, or lacking the wherewithal to accomplish that, pull over to the right. In lower flows, you will have to drag over parts of "Safety Valve."



~ Mile 91.2 - Prefalls and "Safety Valve" - 4,000 cfs ~

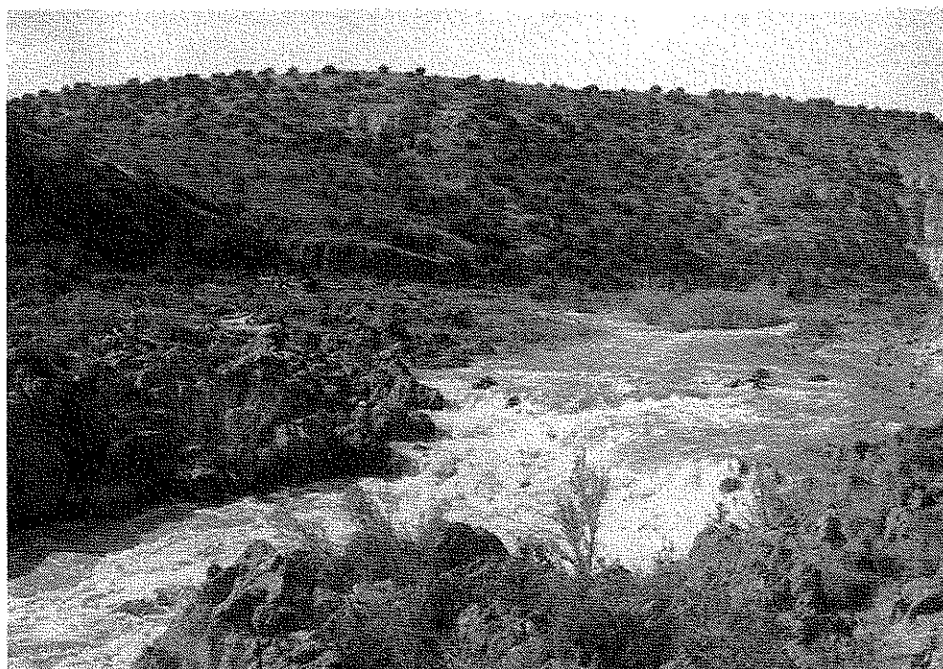
Now, back to Prefalls itself. The flow, your craft and experience will determine if you tackle Prefalls. It is an abrupt 3-4 foot drop in low water and a flush of white holes during high flows. Rocks protruding above the drop can ruin your setup, so study them well. Once on the lip, power stroke hard and lean back a bit so you can land as flat as possible. Where you want to hit the lip will depend upon the flow and should be obvious to you during your looksee. A far left cheat can work for smaller boats at moderate levels.



Prefalls presents real problems for heavily loaded boats. I always lighten up before running both of the Falls. It is worth the effort to run loftier and safer.

All paddlers should have companions at the ready to prevent any problematic swims into the rift below.

Mile 91.3 - Once the Prefalls is run, skirted, ported or lined, the Falls and its pitfalls should be thoroughly pondered. You are at the Verde's most notorious spot, and serious accidents have happened right here.



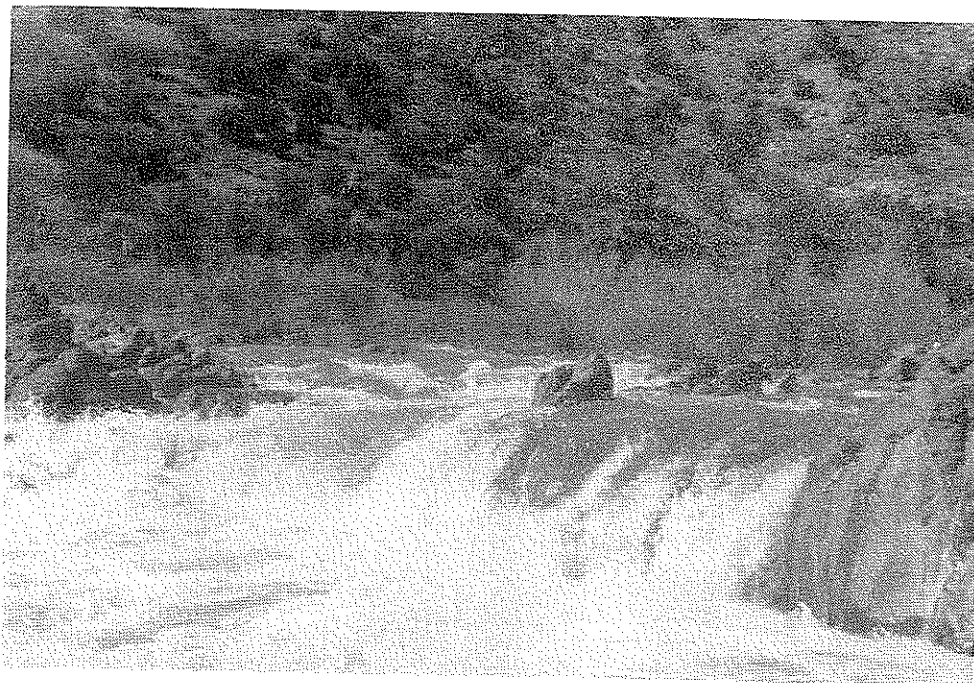
~ Mile 91.3 - Main Falls - 3,000 cfs ~

~ Mile 91.2 - Self-Explanatory ~

The best shore for scouting is the left because it allows better footing, close-up views, portage trails and river access. While you are looking around, take time to hike well below to see what the Post-Falls basalt rift has awaiting your wet or dry presence. Post-Falls contains very notable drops and waves also.

Unlike Prefalls, all the Verde's waters run this singular, spectacular drop. Except in extreme flooding, you'll find no "Safety Valve" channel here! You run the Falls, or you line or portage . . . a port is a must for all novices! Recovery at the Falls and in the long rift below may be difficult, so if you lose it, you could be in for a long, cold and turbulent swim.

One of my most memorable river scares happened while camping below Chasm Creek around M. 93.2. Just before dusk, I noticed an overturned and obviously heavily loaded inflatable kayak adrift in mid-channel. A buddy and I launched our canoe and ferried furiously to the inflatable before it and we would be swept into the Sycamore Rock Gardens. Relief swept over us when we reached the far shore and found nothing



~ Mile 91.3 - Main Falls at 350 cfs ~

except parcels of soaked and ruined gear. While we prepared to ferry the boat back to camp, our other friends had begun their scramble upstream to find the owner.

Thanks be to the river Gods that the kayaker arrived in camp physically intact and in only an initial stage of hypothermia. He and his companion, also in an inflatable, had both tipped at the Falls, lost their boats and swam the entire distance to Mile 92.0. We caught one boat and a strainer caught the other, or this entire lucky scenario could have been otherwise!

This story serves only as a reminder. As you scout the Falls area, ponder well the classic question: Is this run worth the risk of a swim?

If the flow, your experience and your intuition are in favor of a Falls run, here are some considerations.

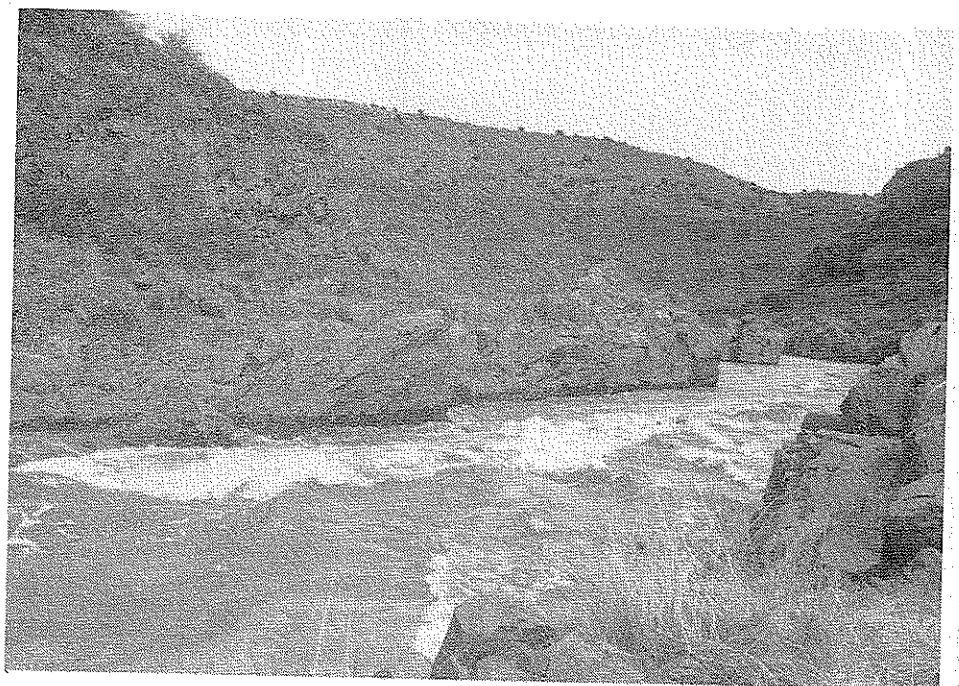
- Under 500 cfs, snaggle tooth rocks in the approach and on the lip could catch your keel and kick you broadside, or over. Plan your strokes well.

- In lower and medium flows, you'll see a center right set as the clearest full run. A short from-shore plunge is okay off the steeper left lip. Or, you could descend the "fish ladder" on the far right.

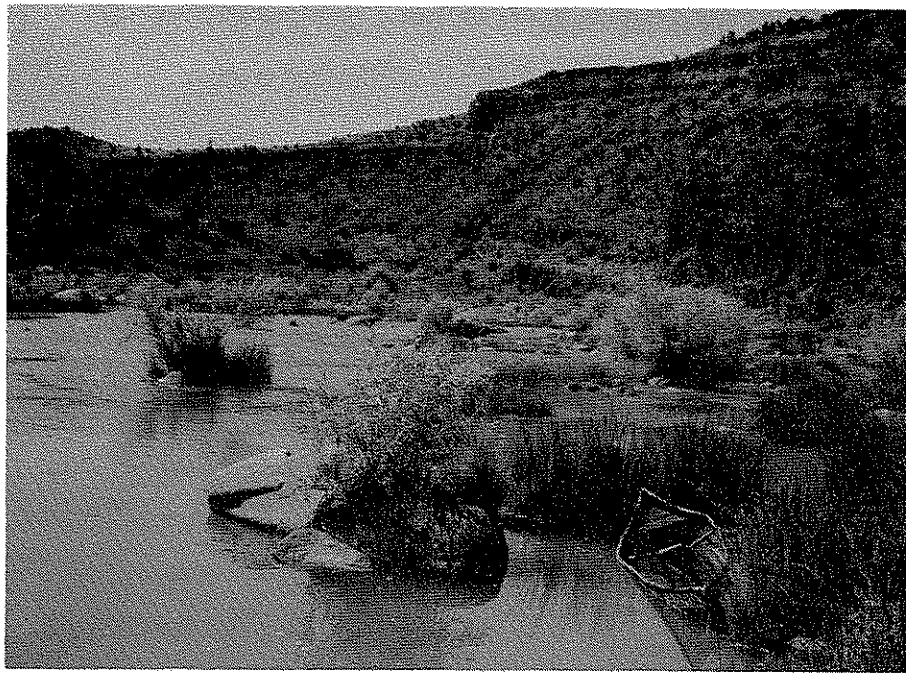
- Plan your tack after the main drop to avoid the mongo rock in the center soon below. A successful plunge can be easily thwarted at mongo. Avoid a pin by drawing hard, and remembering your downstream lean if you do broadside it.

- Even when lightly loaded, you're liable to take water on during the drop. Eddies are scarce, but your best bets may be left just after the drop or to the right just past the rock. Eddy out soon if you need to bail. These small resting places also work well for observation and recovery eddies. In medium to high flows, you'll witness such prolonged turbulence that may make deciding upon recovery spots a guess at best. Have a couple of companions upon the river and upon the basalt for optimum safety.

- Don't relax your safety measures until you are



~ Mile 91.4 - Post Falls Rift - 2,000 cfs ~



~ A Wrecked and Abandoned Testimonial - Mile 93 ~
beyond M. 91.6.

These considerations, and more, are yours alone as you and your mates gaze and gauge the flow of choices presented to you by the Verde Falls on your day.

At Mile 91.6, the flush and flourish of the river through the basalt rift begins to pause, but not until the last of the Post-Falls ride is run. Big waves and some obstacles remain to remind you of the river's pent up energy above. The rift opens and the river provides a safe frolicking trip to the lovely pool around the bend at Mile 91.8. As you round this bend, a calming peace and quiet returns to the canyon.

Mile 91.8 - At this turn, there is a new little low flow drop.

Mile 92 - Elevation 2,890 - Just prior to M. 92, there is a spring at river level on the right.

Mile 92.3 - Draw right to avoid the trees on the left as you descend this significant little chute.

Mile 92.6 - Gauging Station and Trolley.

Mile 92.8 - Chasm Creek enters right. This is still inside the Eagle Closure Area, so avoid the temptation to camp at this lovely spot from December to June.

Mile 93 - Elevation 2870.

Mile 93.1 - The mild but swell Sycamore Rock Gardens begin here and continue for about a quarter mile. At medium to high flows, this section is one of my Verde favorites. I love the scenery surrounding this paddlers' dance floor. Sycamore Canyon can easily be overlooked as it acutely enters on the left at M. 93.2. Sycamore and Chasm are two canyons well worth your time to visit.

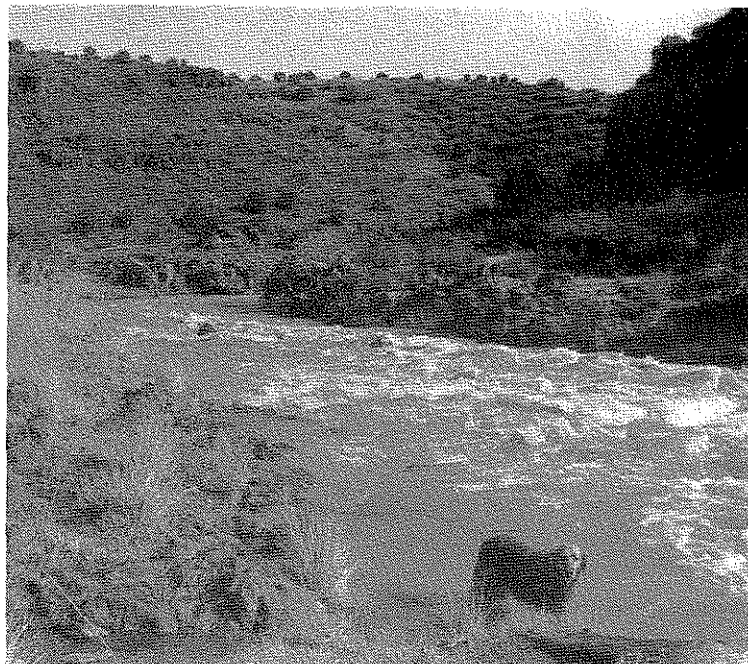
Mile 93.2 - From here on, you are free to camp and explore. The left bank provides ample room for larger parties.

Mile 93.5 - Here is Two Rock Drop. It is worthy of mention because of the possibility of low water pins and higher flow hydraulics found here. In either case, it is fairly easy to run left of the rocks to avoid either encounter. Accomplished floaters will find this a fun spot to play and surf.



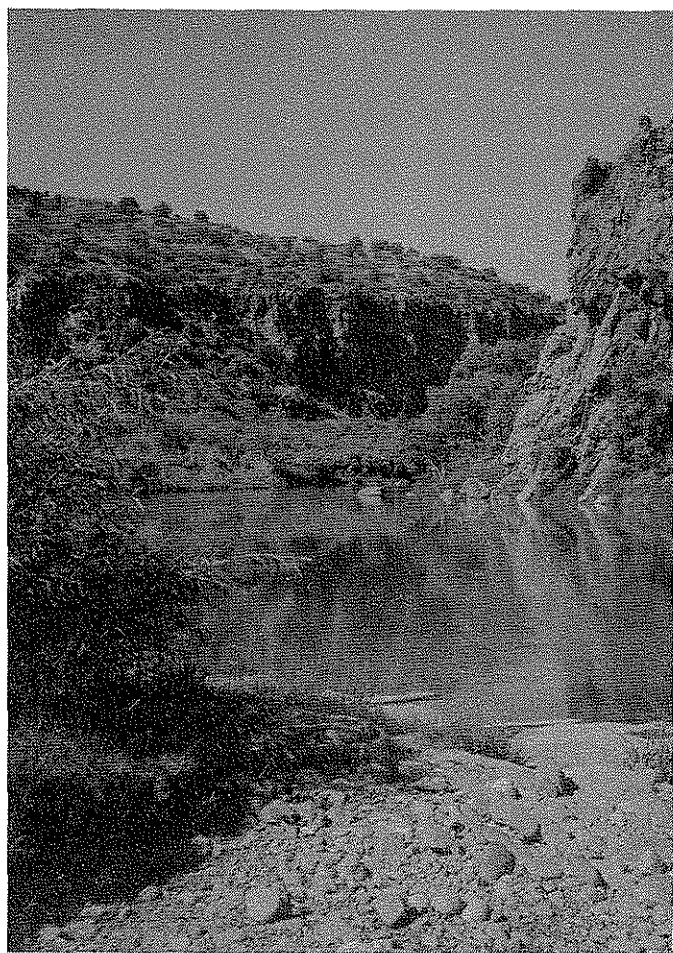
~ The Falls - Mile 91.3 at 3,000 cfs ~

Mile 93.8 - Below Two Rock Drop you'll no doubt notice the tilted slash of basalt on the right where the Verde veers sharply left. At this slash, a potentially bow-flooding drop awaits. Until I swapped stories with another Verde canoer who loves this spot as I do, I called this Cliff Drop. Well, he referred to it as Palisades. How perfect! Since that story session, I have presumptuously adopted the nomiker "Palisades Cliff Drop." Scouting is easiest from the left shore, but your view may be obscured by the prominent rock bar that dominates river left. Most of the flow goes right. During lower cfs, you'll have no choice but to go right unless you prefer a drag in the shallow left side. The right channel leads you to a nifty three-foot drop and then a gem of a pool at the base of the cliff. If you've just recently broken camp, this is a wonderful waker upper! A new sign indicates that here lies the official closure boundary.



~ The End of Postfalls - Mile 91.6 ~

Mile 94 - Elevation 2,860.



~ Mile 91.8 - Pool Below The Falls ~

~ Notes ~



~ Cow Flops and River Ornaments - Drying Out Near Mile 93 ~

subsequent trips, this rapid has acquired the name "Wanna Be Punk." Wanna Be can be tricky, so it is worthy of a look. Mid-river rocks can easily be skirted left at low and medium flows. High water creates some pushy current, waves and a couple of deep holes, as well as a mid-river pin possibility. Your driest ride may be left, but the slick run is to the right of the largest rock. Regardless of your direction, you'll end this run by plunging over the angled ledge-like drop. If you still do not feel adept at mid-river maneuvers, you can easily line your boat down the left side.

Mile 94.5 - Rock Garden - no problem.

Mile 94.8 - Another small drop.

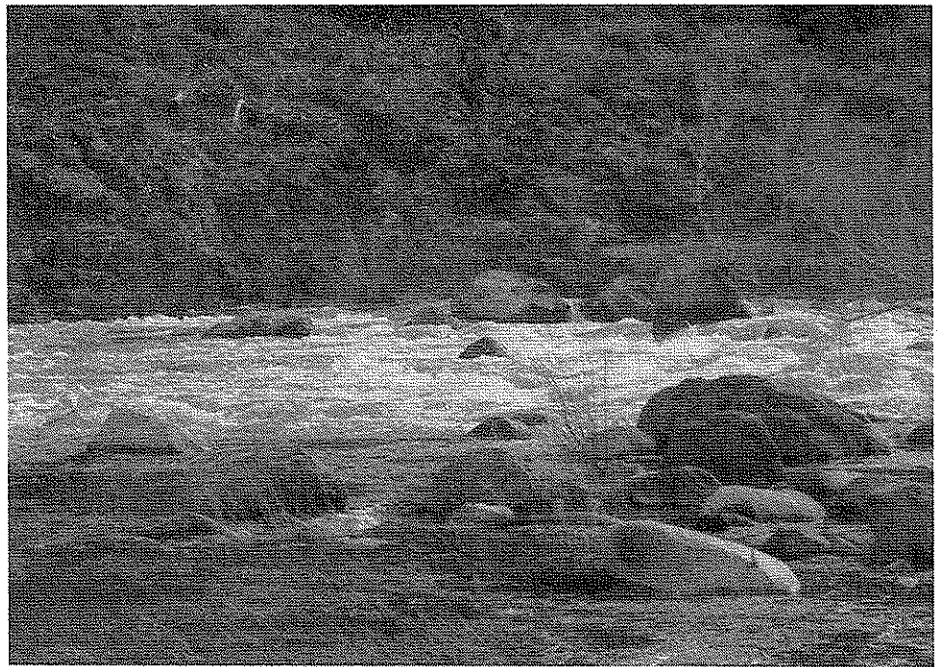
Mile 95 - Elevation 2,850.

Mile 95.1 - Formation Rock Garden. I refer to this as such because of the fascinating limestone solution cave formations on the left. This is another exploration and view spot. Usually the best courses over this drop are far left or center right. Except for high flows, you can expect a bump or two before the current settles you into the deep pool below.

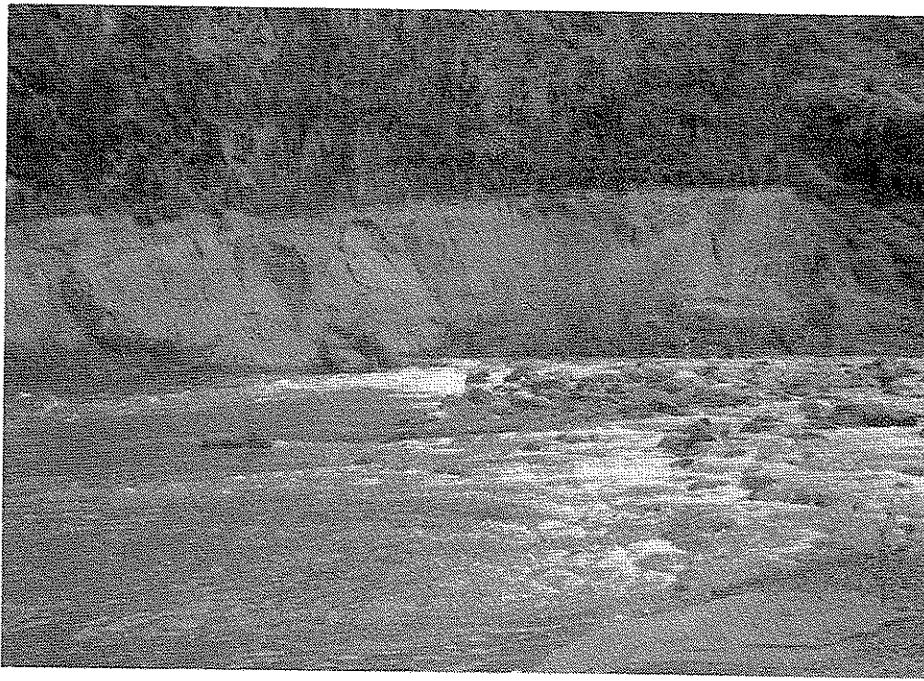
Mile 95.5 - Here is a noteworthy rapid marked but not named on Forest River Guides. (Update: The '92 Guide does now name it "Bull Run.") My first trip through here found a friend and me bath-tubbed in our canoe at the end of this run. I thought we had just run Punk Rock, so I wrung my shirt in disgust at having misread our map. Although there are some vague similarities between this and Punk Rock, we soon, of course, knew Punk Rock was awaiting around the next bend. After numerous

Mile 95.6 - Bull Run Creek enters on your left into the pool just below Wanna Be. On the right shore under the overhang is a curious petroglyph - neoclassic fish by John Q. Public or the real thing?

Mile 96 - Elevation 2,820 - Now you are really at Punk Rock Rapid, or as it is occasionally named, Turkey Gobbler! You may pass under a water gap and notice the terrific views of Brown Springs Property and Pine Mountain. Don't savor the land-



~ Two Rock Drop - Mile 93.5 - (+ -) 300 cfs ~



~ Palisades Cliff Drop - Mile 93.8 - (+ -) 300 cfs ~

scape too long from your boat because it is time to park and scout this drop. Your best look is from the right bank. From there you can best see the predicament you'd experience if you got shoved right of that big rock! That big rock is Punk itself.

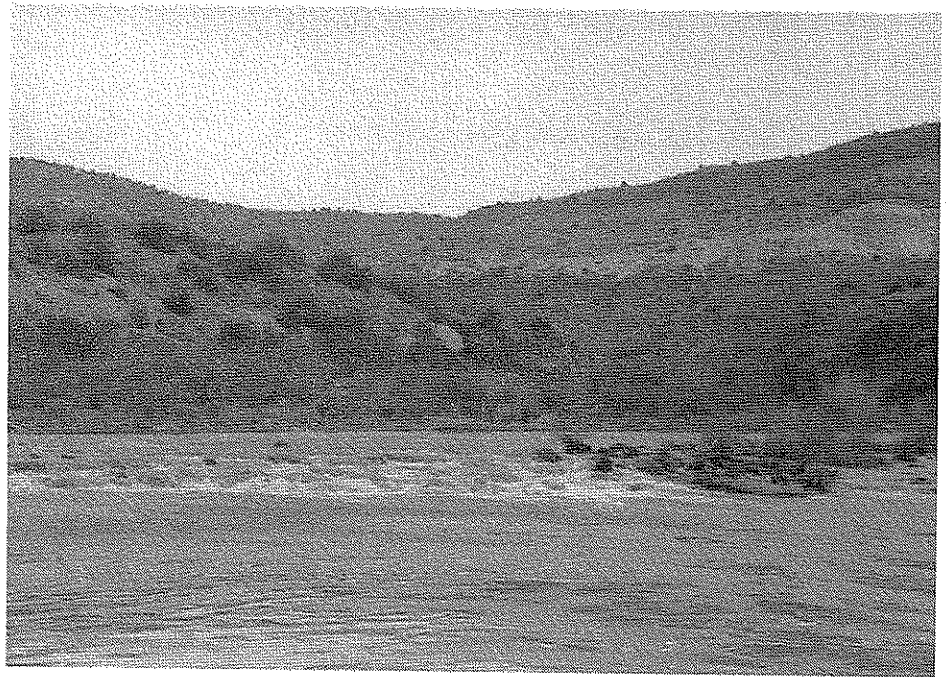
You'll see how most of the river goes into, over or around Punk Rock. For most all flows, the strategy is to start left and stay left. Draw hard near the bottom or you'll likely meet the rock! Higher flows can allow you more room between shore and rock, but can also come with the obvious risk of filling up before you're past the Punk. If this happens, get upstream from your canoe, get feet first, point your feet at the rock and back paddle until you are in the pool or upon the shore. If you do come broadside at the rock, do not lean upstream! Lean into the punk and the current will pillow you around. Mentally preparing yourself for a downstream lean just in case will help prevent the opposite inclination at spots like this. Also when scouting, look carefully at those numerous troublesome obstacles in the top half that could blow your setup at Punk. As with most of the drops you've encountered so far, a

left side line or port is safe if you are getting the yips. A nice recovery pool is below, but the possibilities for mishaps at the rock may require you to put caution first. You are nearing the halfway point of your trip and confidence may be running high. But again, be especially wary with this drop. Punk has caused many swims even among veteran boaters! Walk it if you are at all unsure. There are nice camp spots below Punk on the left, and at about M. 96.4 on the right.

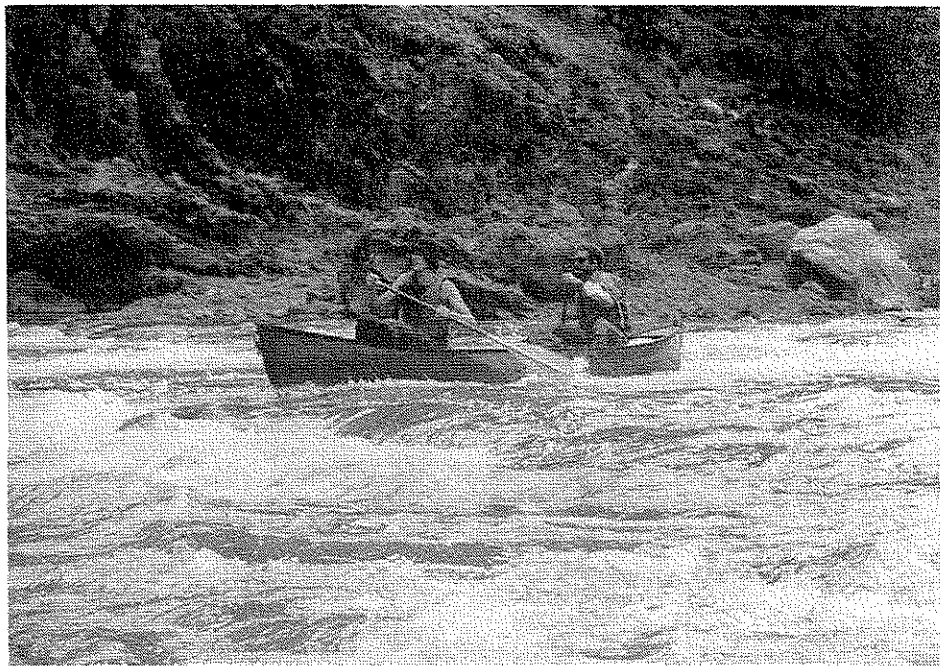
Mile 96.6 - Just before you reach the intrusive transmission lines, you'll run a little chute. This is the first of three times that these wires

will cross the Verde between here and Childs. In the vicinity of each crossing, fun little chutes or rapids are found. A bit of Verde River irony and contrast! M. 96.6 is "Powerline One." Watch for strainers between here and Gap Creek.

Mile 97 - Elevation 2,800 - Here is the Gap Creek R.A.P. The access is on your right directly across from that sycamore-shaded bench on your left. The spot is commonly used as a camp for two-day runs to



~ Formation Rock Garden - Mile 95.1 ~



~ Lee & John Ficker - Mile 93.5 (300 cfs) ~

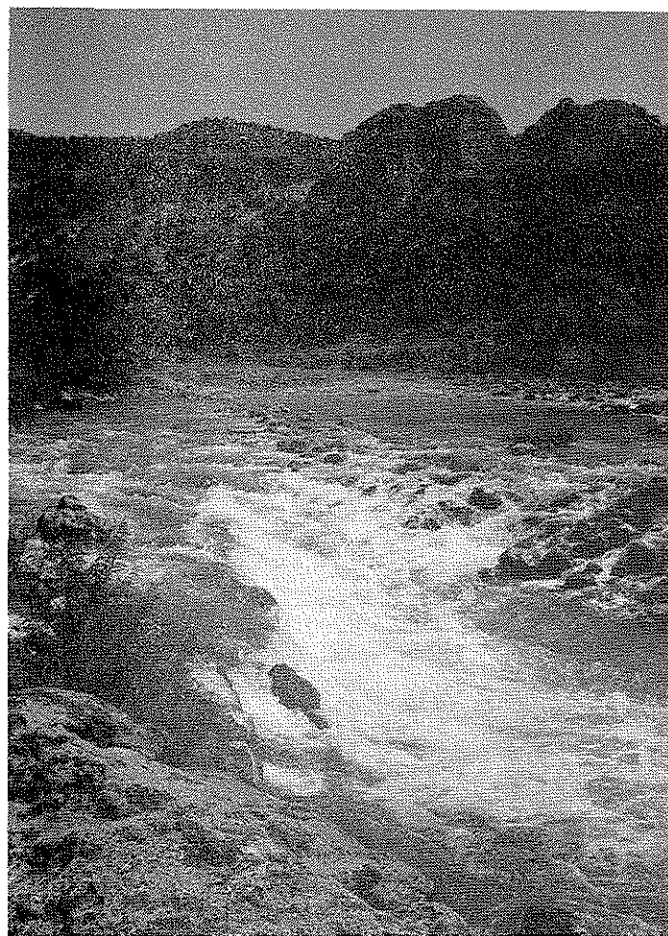
Childs. The half mile long trail out to FR 574 can be difficult to spot at first, so you are wise to find it before shouldering your canoe. It is a well-used trail that follows and crosses gorgeous Gap Creek clear up to the parking area just below the gate to Brown Springs Ranch. Brown Springs property is clearly defined by the fences and gates. Please close all gates and respect the owner's privacy and desires for a clean and unspoiled habitat. Don't camp below mile 97 until you are past Bushman Rapid. UPDATE: Please see the end of this chapter.

Mile 97.1 - Another scenic creek enters on your left. But before you reach Towel Creek, you will have negotiated a rather tricky spot. At flows above 300 cfs or so, two mid-channel rocks create the need for some slick paddle work. Keeping right through the trees just below the Gap Creek R.A.P. to avoid these rock currents may be a good plan during medium to high flows. The right channels reenter the main flow just below this spot. For the next quarter mile, you'll have pleasant paddling with some riffles and prime scenery. UPDATE: Please see the end of this chapter.

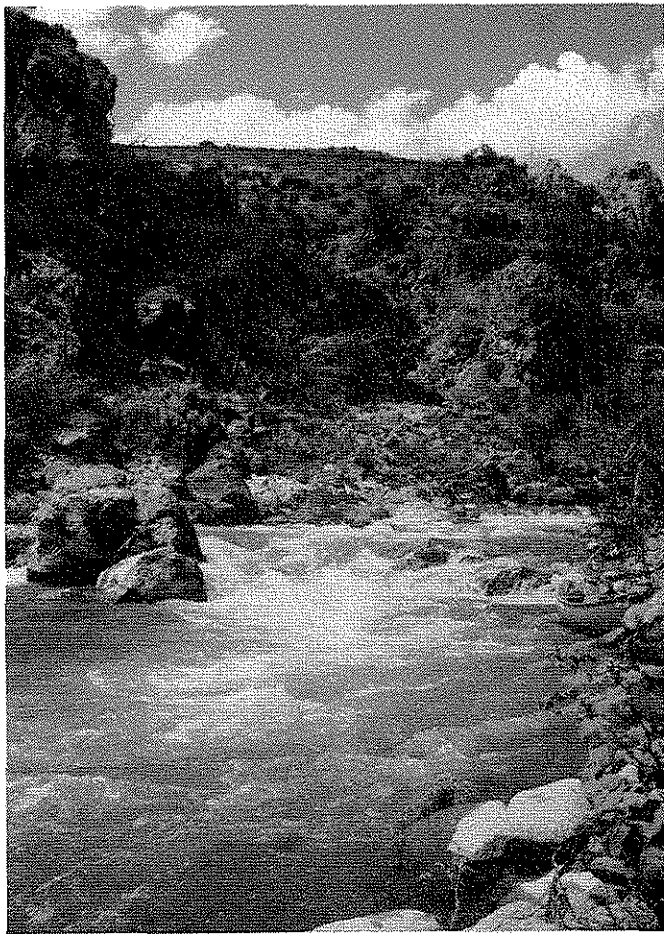
Mile 97.5 - Bushman Rapid - Bushman is always worth a look. I think it is one of the most fascinating areas to study the workings of this river. Pull over to the left and scramble through brush and over ledges to glean your best view of the many options for this bushy cascade. In low water, you'll notice that the

main flow entrance may be too rock-choked for a clean run. If that is the case, you'll be okay to walk or line your canoe to the mini-pool at the base of the wall where the flow abruptly turns right. Or, your gear can be man-handled through the trees on the left of the rocky drop until you are set up for the straight shot into the heart of Bushman. The heart can be run even in very low flow. At medium and higher flows, the clash of water and wall, and the size of the waves and holes in the heart may sway you to avoid the main run. Lining is a tough go on the left and virtually impossible on the right where numerous falls, debris and steep banks are found.

The alternative lies in the right channel. It may be obscured by the puzzle of surface rocks, but it is there. This right channel can be lined or walked with rela-



~ "Wanna Be Punk" or "Bull Run" - Mile 95.5 prior to 1993 ~



~ "Punk Rock Rapid" - Mile 96 - 200 cfs ~
tive ease.

If you do choose to run Bushman top to bottom, be sure to scout it well, have a plan to draw hard right at the turn to avoid a flush on the wall, or hug the left at the top to eddy turn upriver from the main flow; and be certain you can avoid, ride over or skirt the waves that can definitely cause a swim. I have experienced huge waves in here. A lengthy pool awaits before you work on the next small drop at mile 97.8.

Mile 97.8 - Just before the wide left turn of the Verde and after the last of the Bushman prodigal channels, you'll run a little drop. It is a pinball affair with most of the flow going right.

Mile 98 - Elevation 2,780.

Mile 98.2 - You may want to pull over to the left for a scout of this fun and deceptively tricky "Little Do Drop" Rapid that can have swell waves at higher flows and keel catchers at mild flow. Just right of center is probably the clearest choice. There are sev-

eral pin possibilities in Do Drop, so novices should be very cautious. In high water, the biggest rock, located dead center near the end of Do Drop, can create a boat-eating hole. Below here there is a still pool to ponder before the Rocky Split at M. 98.5.

Mile 98.5 - This is an intriguing spot. Rocky Split is an apt name for this unpredictable rapid. Volume of flow is the key. At low flows, you are likely to underappreciate what can take place here because you may be uttering expletives during your walking descent of a parched channel. The Verde has so many choices between the obstacles of this acute rocky drop, and so must you choose. It is hard to scout. The right is the clearest of strainers, but surprisingly it may have the least flow. UPDATE: Please see the end of the chapter. The center channel has a nasty strainer at the top, but once you bypass it, you may have the clearest run at medium plus flow. If you go to the furthest end of the pool above this split, you'll be given no choice but to descend the left channel. This has the steepest drop, and it is relatively full and clear of troublesome debris and boulders. Higher flows require seat-of-



~ "Punk Rock" - Mile 96 - 350 cfs ~



~ Looking Up to the Turn Midway Down Bushman - 350 cfs ~

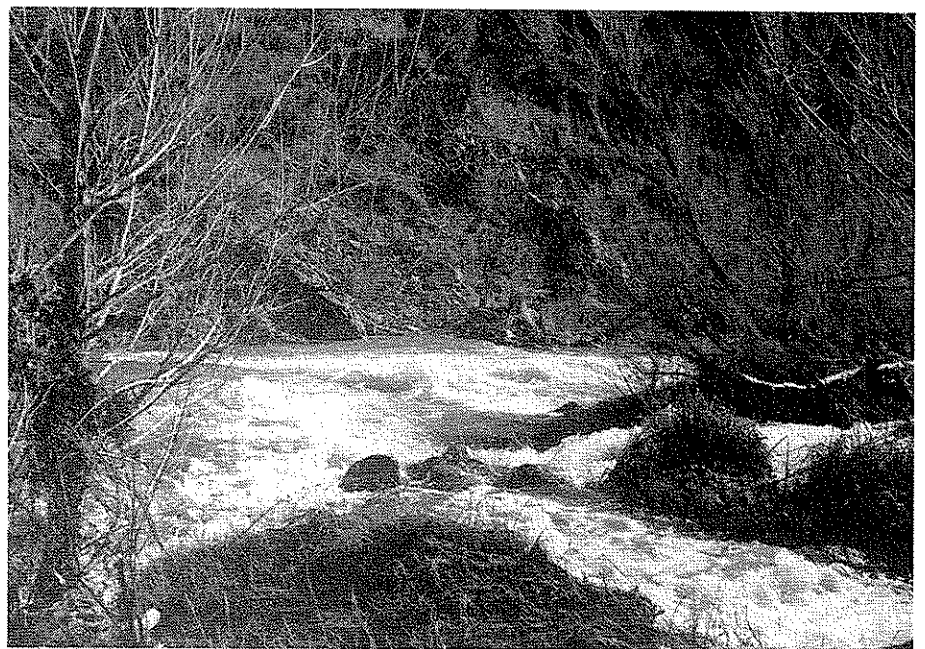
your-knees thinking because of the possibilities of strainer dilemmas. At high flows, canoers should take the time to walk down the right bank until the triad channels merge. There's your best look at how to proceed. UPDATE: See the end of the chapter.

Mile 99 - Elevation 2,760.

Mile 99.1 - Here you'll run a small drop that is the precursor for White Flash Rapid at Mile 99.2. This is also roughly the halfway mark of the Verde's journey from Sullivan Dam in Paulden to Granite Reef near Phoenix. White Flash can be scouted from either shore. It should be scouted, especially during high flows, because the heart of the drop is around that right turn at the base of the white rock formation. That prominent formation, of course, fathered the label for this rapid. In medium to lower flows, you'll be able to easily hug the right side of the turn and paddle the two-tiered drop unencumbered. At high flows, you are wise to do the same because there can be a lot of push toward the wall that the novice may be hard-pressed to avoid. Another option is to approach this drop in two stages: run the drop above the turn on the left, and then

eddy out into the midway pool. From there you can choose your course into the heart. The white formation extends itself with rock ledges that can provide fun play spots when the flow is right. All in all, this named rapid is less technical than many no-named drops encountered in this Verde run. The White Flash does, however, stand as a gateway to one of the more unique areas that this stretch of the Verde has to offer. UPDATE: Please see the end of the chapter.

Mile 99.4 - "Gospel Drop"- Around the bend from White Flash, you'll hit another no-name challenging little rapid that has very similar features to "Do Drop." Don't nap in church and plan your line well because "Gospel Drop" can be tricky in low to medium flows and have a lot of power and waves in high water. At the base of "Gospel Drop" is a lovely pool and the entrance of Gospel Hollow on your left. I'd love to know the origin of this name. Perhaps some bottomlander from the Bible belt South came here in search of something! Or perhaps it was so named because of the majestic cathedral-like rock formations up the holler a way? Great region to camp and explore.



~ Lower Bushman Rapid - Mile 97.5 ~

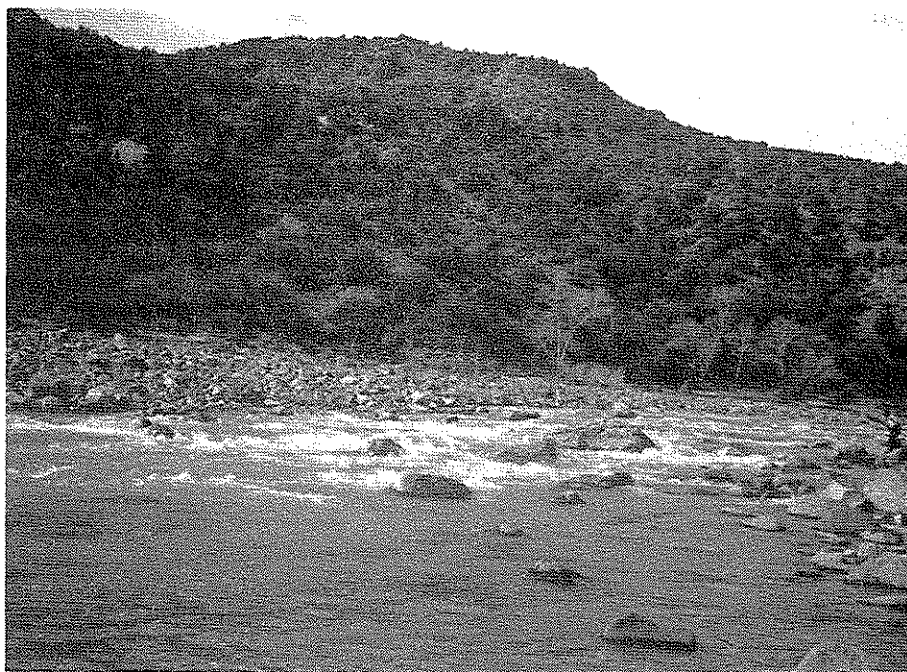
Mile 99.7 - Nice chute with a sizable hole at the bottom. Stay right and watch for trees in bigger flows.

Mile 100 - Elevation 2,740.

Mile 100.1 - Chutes among several split channels.

Mile 100.4 - Easy going chutes and small drops here at at M. 100.6. Good waves in heavy water, though.

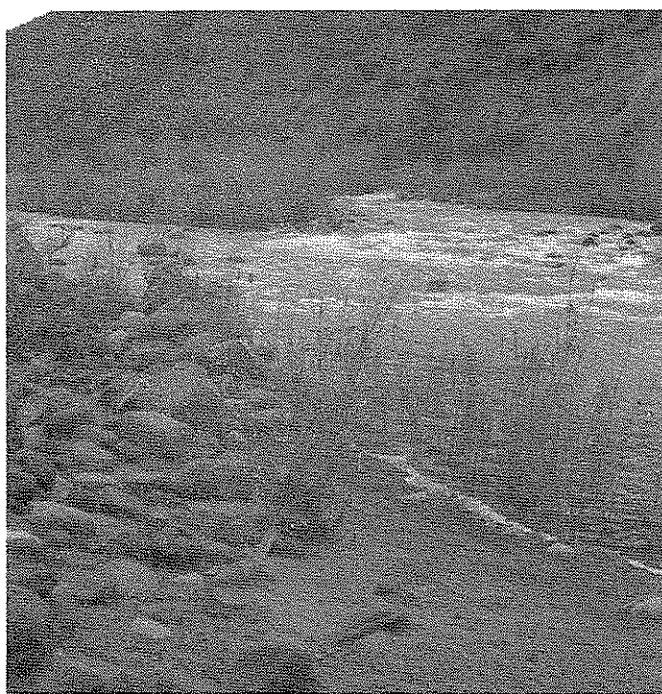
Mile 101 - Elevation 2,720 - Just before Mile 101, another meandering jewel of a creek enters off the Verde Rim. Cold Water Creek's entrance may be disguised, but it is there and commonly provides clean



~ "Lil Do Drop" Rapid at Mile 98.2 (+ -) 200 cfs ~

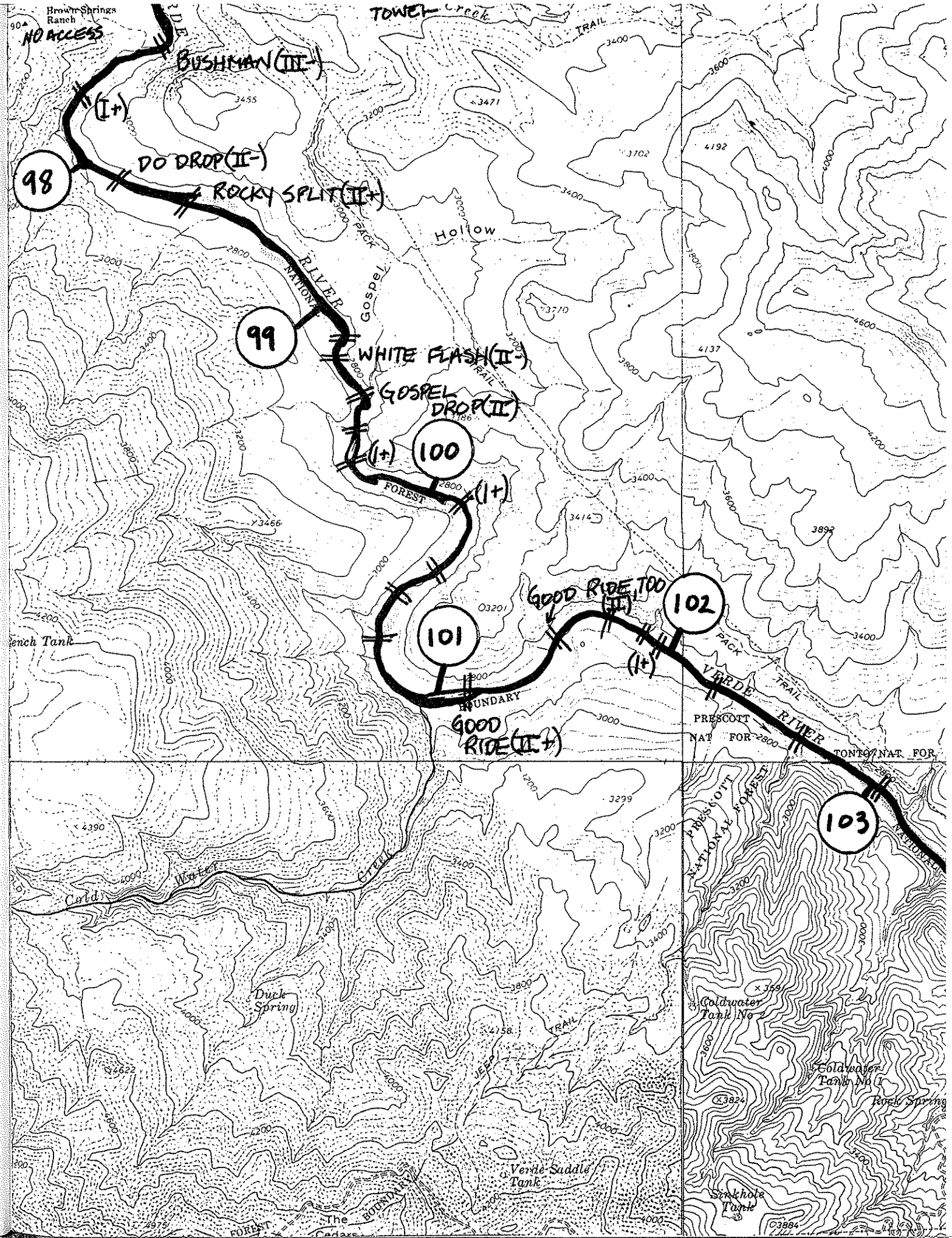
water just up from the Verde even during the driest times.

Mile 101.1 - "Good Ride" and good fun awaits just below Cold Water Creek near the white slash of rock. During elevated flows, Good Ride will provide some good-sized waves and swift going. It is a pretty clear but relatively narrow number that can push with enough force to swamp novices and heavily weighted canoes. Be especially cautious at the end of the "Good Ride" because there is likely to be a swamper



~Rocky Split - Mile 98.5 - Pre '93 ~

~ Notes ~



90A
Brown Springs Ranch
NO ACCESS

BUSHMAN (III)

98

DO DROP (II-)

ROCKY SPLIT (II+)

99

WHITE FLASH (II-)

GOSPEL DROP (II)

100

101

GOOD RIDE TOO (II)

102

GOOD RIDE (II+)

103

ench Tank

Coldy

Duck Spring

Verde Saddle Tank

Coldwater Tank No 2

Coldwater Tank No 1

Snakehole Tank

200

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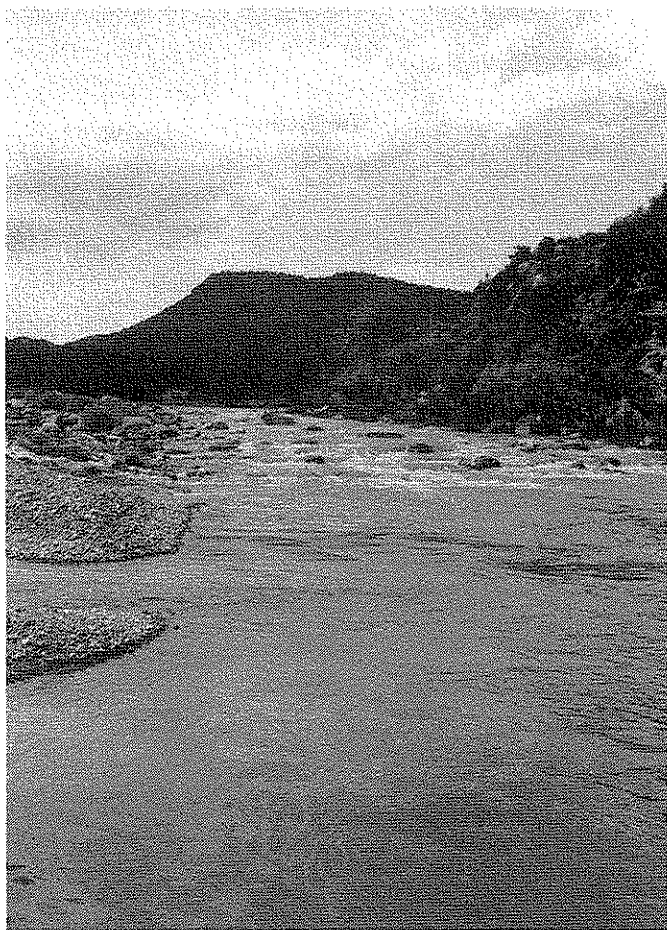
200

200

wave or two. Even in lower flows, "Good Ride" is still a suitable name for this lengthy and lovely rapid. A scout is advised when the flow is up.

Mile 101.6 - A little way down from Good Ride, you'll see another white slash of rock similar to that near White Flash Rapid. A minute or two above that slash of white, is what I'll call "Good Ride Too." Depending upon the flow you are running, this spot may be even more of a ride than its upriver brother. It is a long wave-hopping, rock-averting Class II that is just a blast in all but the boniest times. UPDATE: Please see the end of the chapter regarding some changes from Mile 101.7 to Mile 103.

Mile 102 - Elevation 2,700 - The Verde straightens into a southeasterly direction for a time. Headwinds commonly stymie progress of boaters here.



~ Gospel Drop - Mile 99.4 ~



~ Lower White Flash Rapid - Around 250 cfs ~

Mile 102.6 - A small drainage enters right, curiously marking the point where three of Arizona's National Forests share a common boundary. You may encounter a small low-flow rock garden here as well, or more wavy going in high water.

Mile 103 - Elevation 2,680 - Small rapids at 103 and 103.5.

Mile 104 - Elevation 2,660 - Before the long, windy straits end with that left turn ahead, you run mild rapids around Mile 104.

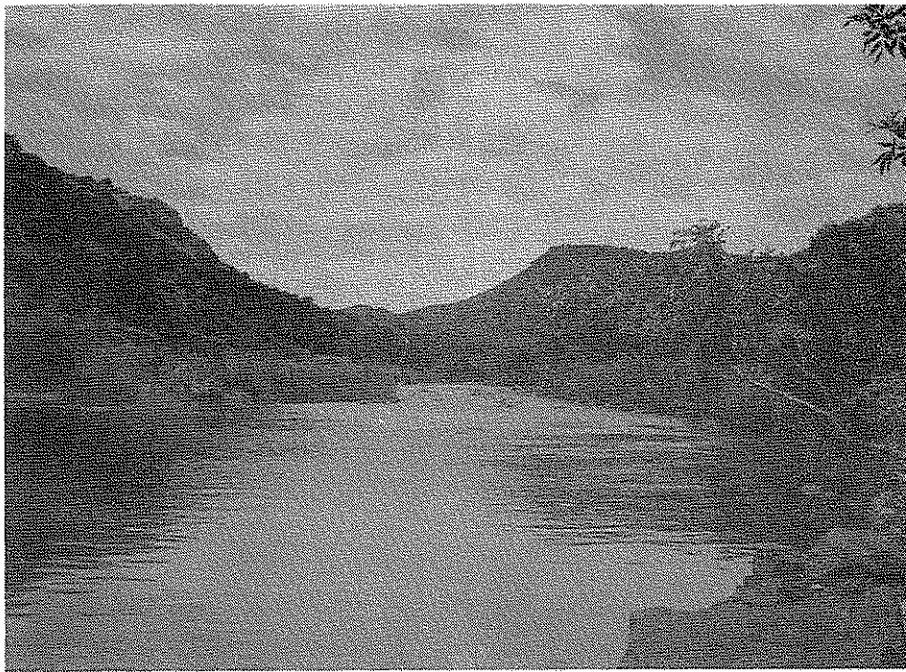
Mile 104.3 - Here is a new tangled and squirrely spot at the elbow of the left turn. Use caution to avoid strainers as you descend the split channels in pushy flows.

Mile 104.5 - Here is "Powerline Two." You'll recall that the first was run just above Gap Creek. This rapid comes a couple hundred yards upriver from the wire crossing. It is a Class II+ rapid with terrific waves and holes in flows above 400 or so.

Mile 104.7 - A noteworthy little drop during healthy cfs.

Mile 104.9 - Another new spot with similar features and cautions as the one you just floated at M. 104.2.

Mile 105 - Elevation 2,640.



~ Gospel Hollow Enters River Left - Mile 99.4 ~

Mile 105.2 - Private residence and ford.

Mile 105.3 - Directly below the wires and flag-marked ford, you'll hit "Powerline Three." What was once a well-defined channel is now a collage of choices amidst the trees and brush. Far right may be the best course.

Mile 105.4 - A couple of minutes past Powerline Three, the river jogs left around a rock outcrop. Upon that rock, you can tie up and decide how you wish to proceed around the large island that appears clearly on your topo. The left channel provides a paddler's dance during elevated flows as the Verde cascades down the lengthy "Child's Rock Garden" - a delightful finale. During lower flows, however, the rocky knocking can be tiring this close to your pullout. In fact, you should go right in all flows below 350 cfs.

Most floaters choose to go right around the island because of the lure of the Verde Hot Springs. Indeed, the thought of warm waters after a cold run may be too tempting to pass up, but a word of warning to you first-timers, family sorts and old-schoolers - unabashed nudity and

semi-trashed soakers are common at the Springs. In fact, many people travel to Childs simply to partake in the Hot Spring's reputation as a spot to unfurl and unwind. You can expect to see, really see, many people from M. 105.5 and Childs from Memorial Day weekend until summer's end.

If you choose to run the right channel to the Springs, you are wise to scout the top of this drop because during healthy flows, tight turns, strainers and pushy currents could cause unwelcome mishaps just when you are so close to shedding your neoprene and thawing your digits! The trail from the rock outcrop along the right bank provides good

scouting views. Once you've passed the tricky top part, the river pools and allows easy parking for a Springs visit. There was a twenty-room resort and spa here from the 1920's until fire destroyed it in 1962. It is a lovely and historic place well worth your time to explore. If you wish to run the left "Childs Rock Garden" and visit the Hot Springs as well, it is only a three-minute walk down the trail from the parking spot.

Mile 105.7 - This is a pushy Class II- drop that could



~ "Good Ride" - Mile 101.1 ~

swamp you.

Mile 105.9 - The channels merge and the last steep drops of this stretch are negotiated. Soon the Verde pools all the way to your pullout at the Childs Campground.

Mile 106 - Elevation 2,620.

Mile 106.4 - The community of Childs.

Mile 106.5 - The falls on your left is water from Fossil Springs, 10 miles northeast from here, returning after its entrapment in the flumes and turbines of the Childs and Irving Power Plants. Arizona Public Service owns and operates these plants. In fact, they are APS' only two hydroelectric facilities. The father of APS, the Arizona Power Company (as in TAPCO near Clarkdale), built Childs in 1909 and Irving in 1916 to help meet the needs for power during the heyday mining eras in Jerome, Crown King and Prescott. In the 1920's, these tiny giants provided all of the electrical



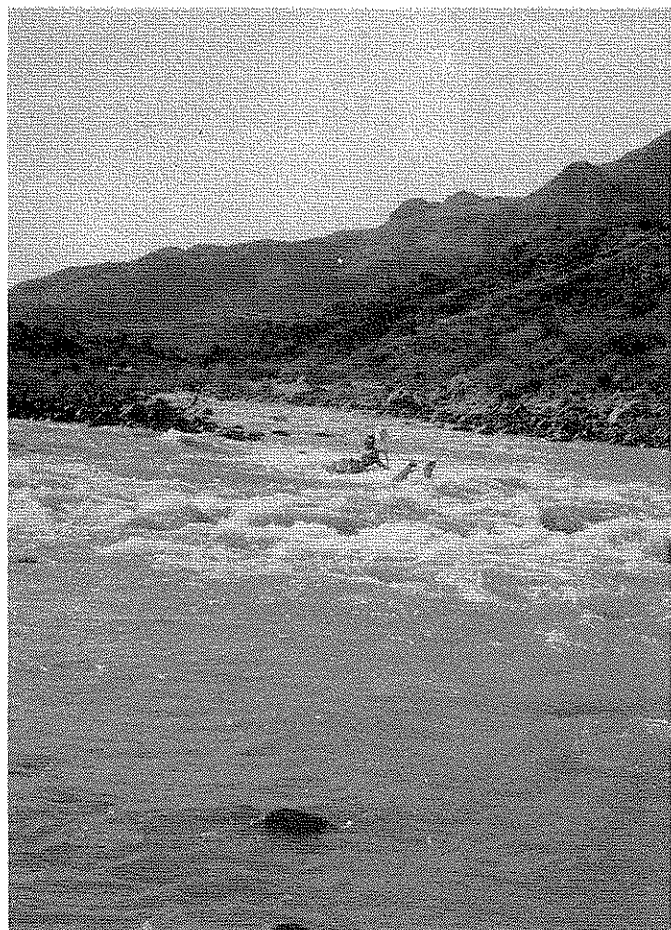
~ Childs Power Plant - Mile 106.5 ~

juice for Yavapai County. To this day, the plants remain profitable enough for APS to maintain the remote and cozy community. Both plants were recently recognized on the National Register of Historic Places.

In comparison to other hydroelectric operations of our arid southwest, these little plants have minimal impact on their natural surroundings. Can you imagine if Sterling Childs and his fellow TAPCO directors had attempted to dam the Verde instead? Perish the notion.

Mile 106.6 - Here is the public R.A.P. at Childs on your left. There are no facilities, except for an odiferous outhouse. If you are in need of assistance, the locked gate to Childs community is a quarter mile up the road. The families in Childs understandably tire of thoughtless intruders, so please be reminded to bug them only in emergencies.

With good going, you are about an hour and a half from either Strawberry or Camp Verde – a nice drive to revive your stories from this beautiful stretch of the Wild and Scenic Verde.



~ Brad Newman in the final drop of the run at Mile 105.8 ~

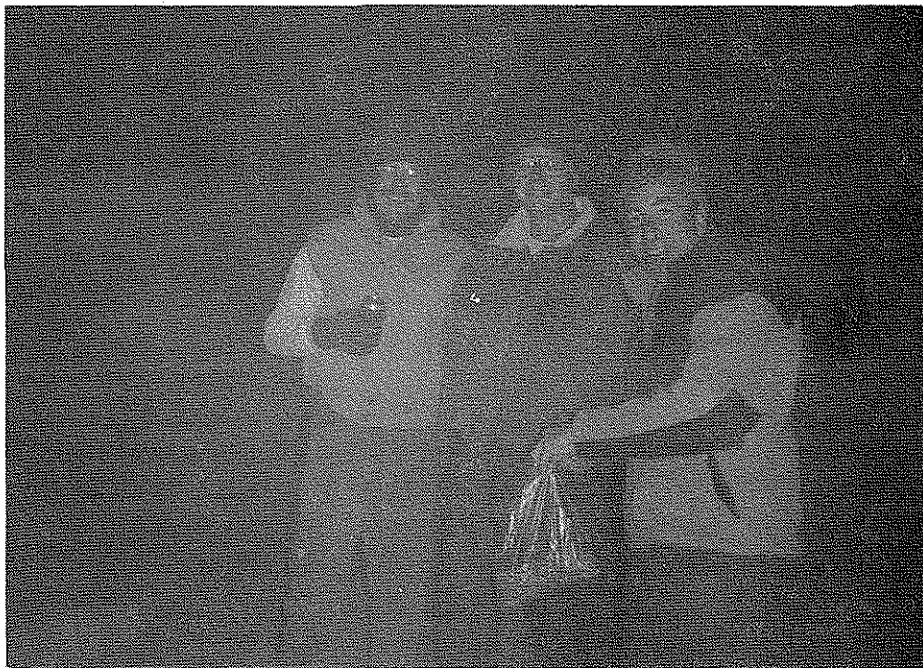


~ Downriver from Verde Hot Springs - Mile 105.5 ~

UPDATES

BEASLEY (M. 89) TO CHILDS (M. 106.5)

Mile 97.0 - The whole of the Gap Creek and Towel Creek area has been dramatically and, it would seem, irreversibly changed. The Sycamore beach camp spot is no longer quite as enticing because of flood damage. The Gap Creek entrance is now an enormous, heavily scoured boulder fan with some growth, however, starting anew just one season after the '93 rampage. Just up from Gap Creek, a new rock garden and narrow and swift chute have been created. Be careful of strainers and undercutting



~ Bob, Jeff and Ed -- The Stories Get Bigger With Every Telling! ~

here in medium to high flows.

The old tricky boulder-studded spots near Towel Creek entrance no longer exist, but floaters should still be careful here as the growth begins to reappear. Nice class 1+ rapids below Towel Creek are still there. Higher flows will create some decent waves and holes here.

Mile 98.5 - Novices and first-timers to this stretch should definitely consider a scout down the right shore. Rocky Split has become more formidable in a couple of places than it was before. Some old strainer problems remain and some new abrupt bedrock ledges and drops have been created.

The right and center channels carry the flow now while the old left member of the triad is no longer. The right channel carries the majority of the flow for now, so it is typically the floaters' choice. However, be forewarned that this long and swift rock-dodging rapid terminates with a new steep three-foot plunge that requires some sure paddle work to hit properly. In medium flows on up, this ledge can hold some



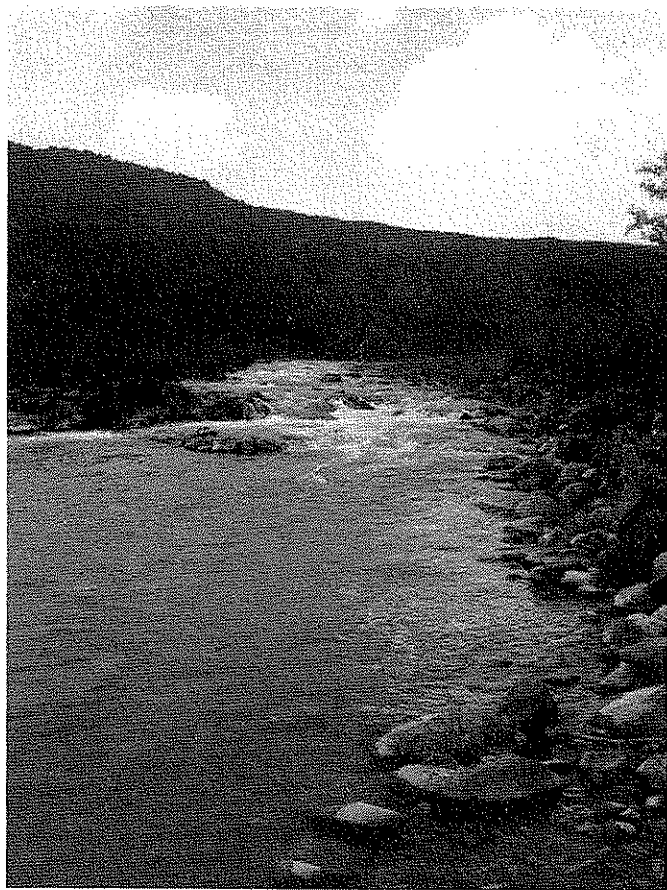
~ Mile 96.1 - Camp Just Below Punk Rock ~

keep'em recirculating power. Slightly left of center is the best setup during average flows. In higher flows, this channel of Rocky Split is a swell wavy and relatively unobstructed ride.

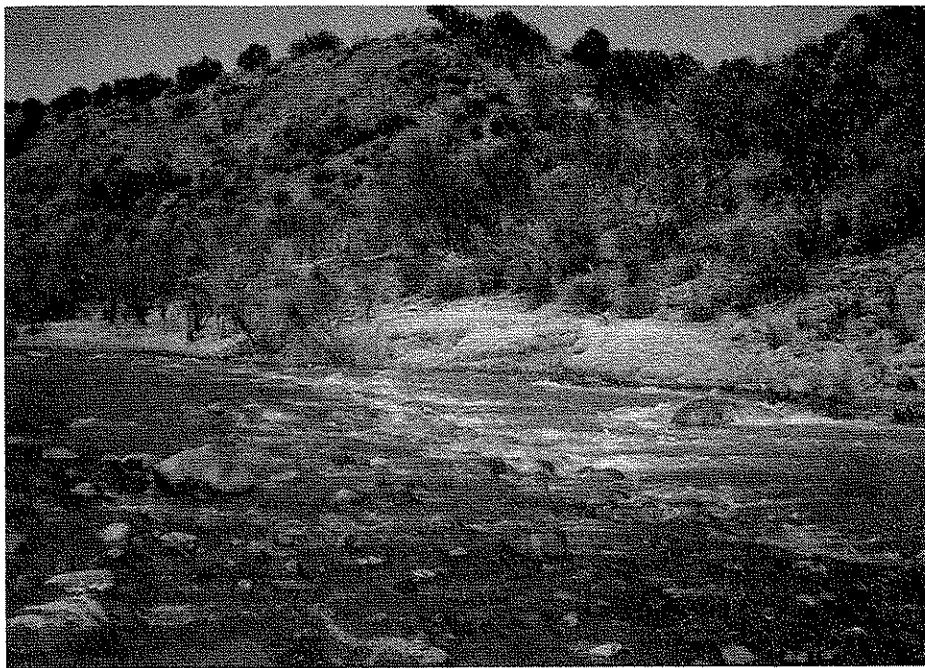
The left channel still has some strainers at the top end, so use caution. Once into the channel, the pace of the flow seems slower than the right channel, making it slightly easier to miss the multitudes of exposed rocks.

Mile 99.2 - White Flash Rapid. Here is a change since 1993 that is just lurking to cause hardship for any unsuspecting beginning boaters. In the top stage of White Flash, the river has carved a new pushy channel way left that has a large boulder dead center. It is a classic greenhorn-gotcha-rap-ya lower flow hazard.

It's wise to go as far right as you can (hugging the inside of the turn) even if it means grinding over the rock bar. If you do miscalculate and sweep broadside into this "White Flash Bulletin," for heaven's sake lean into it! Friends who wrapped a new Dagger Legend here refer to this as "Dagger Rock"!



~ Mile 98.5 - Right Channel of Rocky Split - 350 cfs - Post '93 ~

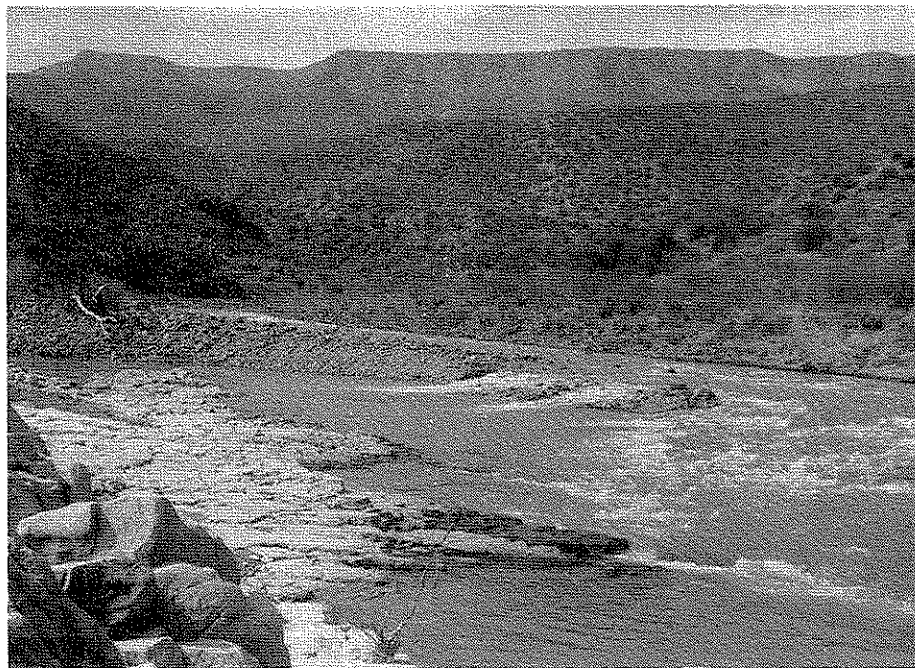


~ Mile 99.2 - Top Half of White Flash - 300 cfs ~

The remainder of White Flash is relatively unchanged and still easily negotiated down the center right side.

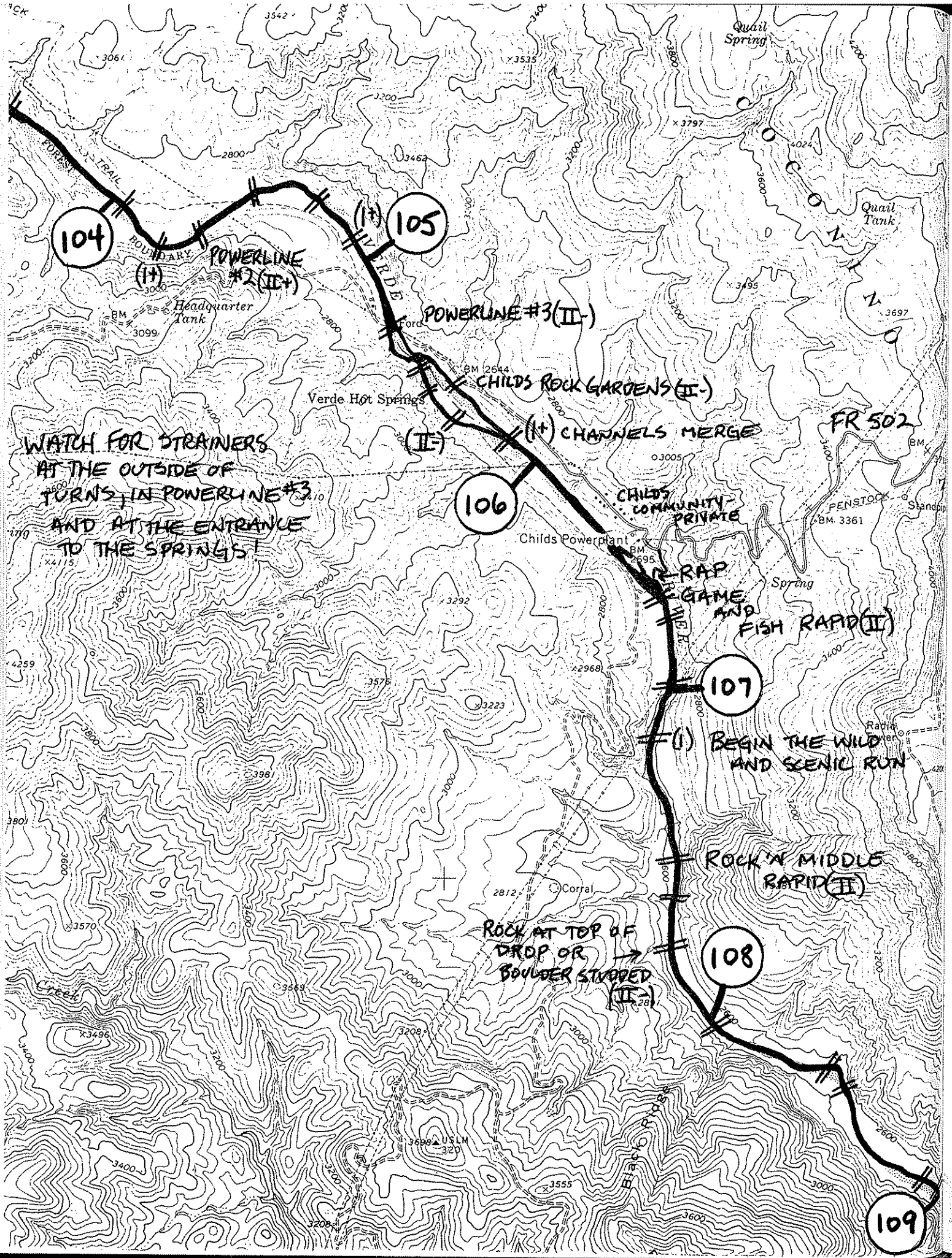
Mile 101.7 to Mile 103 - In this latter quarter of Mile 101 after the "Good Rides," some noteworthy rapids and features have been created. The new series of rock gardens and split channels have added a little more interest to this previously flat water region – just more of the scores of fascinating examples of the Verde's ever-changing ways. Again, during elevated flows, this new area can be more challenging because of confused currents, obstructions and lateral waves.

Finally: At the risk of once again sounding insultingly redundant, I must state: Because the Verde's character can change as fast as the weather during monsoon season, let your eyes be the guide while you are upon the river.



~ Mile 101.7 - The bottom of "Good Ride, Too" (200 cfs) Post '94 ~

~ NOTES ~



WATCH FOR STRAINERS
AT THE OUTSIDE OF
TURNS IN POWERLINE #3
AND AT THE ENTRANCE
TO THE SPRINGS

CHILD'S ROCK GARDENS (II-)

RAP
AND
FISH RAPID (II)

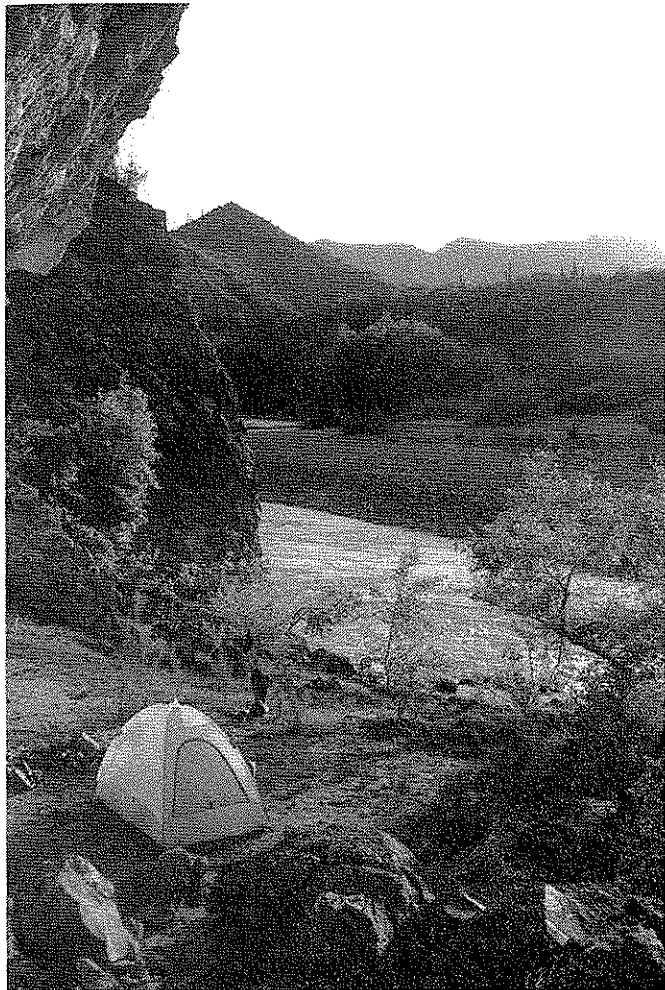
BEGIN THE WILD
AND SCENIC RUN

ROCK N MIDDLE
RAPID (II)

ROCK AT TOP OF
DROP OR
BOULDER STOPPED
(II-)

109

CHILDS (M. 106.6) TO HORSESHOE DAM (M. 149)



~ Mile 125.1 - Mule Shoe Bend ~

RIVER ACCESS POINTS ~RAPS~

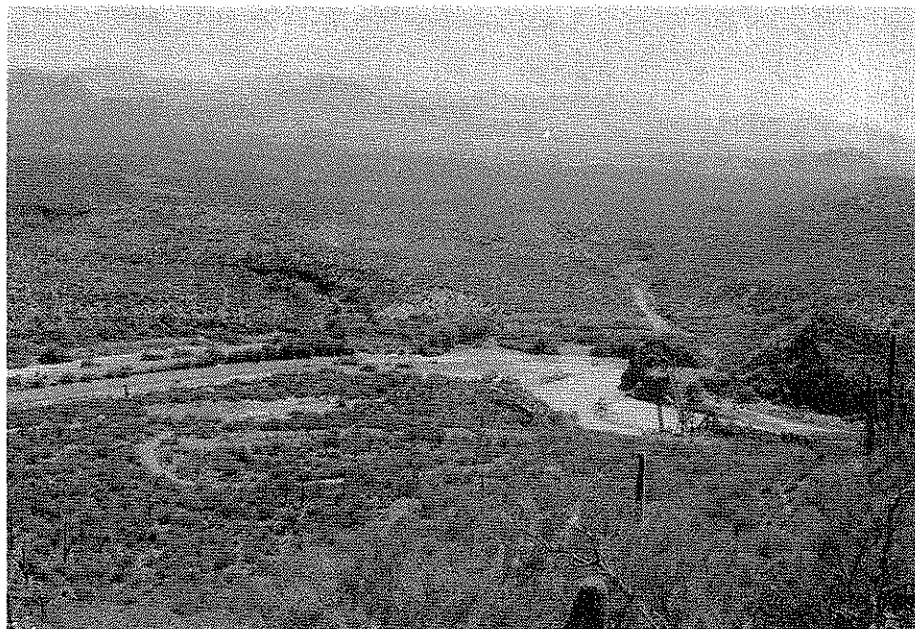
Childs Campground (M. 106.6) -
Please refer to the previous chapter.

Red Creek (M.129.3) - This RAP
marks the southern boundary of the
designated Wild and Scenic portion
of the Verde. It is accessed by tak-
ing the Bloody Basin FR 269 (see
below) to FR 18. FR 18 is a 4-wheel
only jeep trail that runs in and out of

- Total River Miles - 42.4
- Elevation Drop - 2,620 to 1,920
- Average Drop - 16 feet per mile
- Class - Class II with some II+ at high flows
- Topo Maps - Verde Hot Springs, Wet Bottom Mesa, Chalk Mountain and Horseshoe Dam
- Shuttle Time - 6 to 8 hours
- Days Needed - 3 (absolute minimum) to a lifetime! (It would take you that to see it all.)

Red Creek for about 7 miles until it reaches the RAP. You are advised to have your Tonto Forest Map and the Wet Bottom Mesa and Bloody Basin topos with you when you motor or hike down here. A run from Red Creek to Sheep Bridge would make a dandy day trip or leisurely overnighter.

Sheep Bridge (M. 139.1) - Although this chapter ends at Horseshoe, Sheep Bridge is the more commonly used exit RAP, especially for inflatable trips. For most paddlers, there is little allure to ending a run with a pull and grind across a windswept lake.



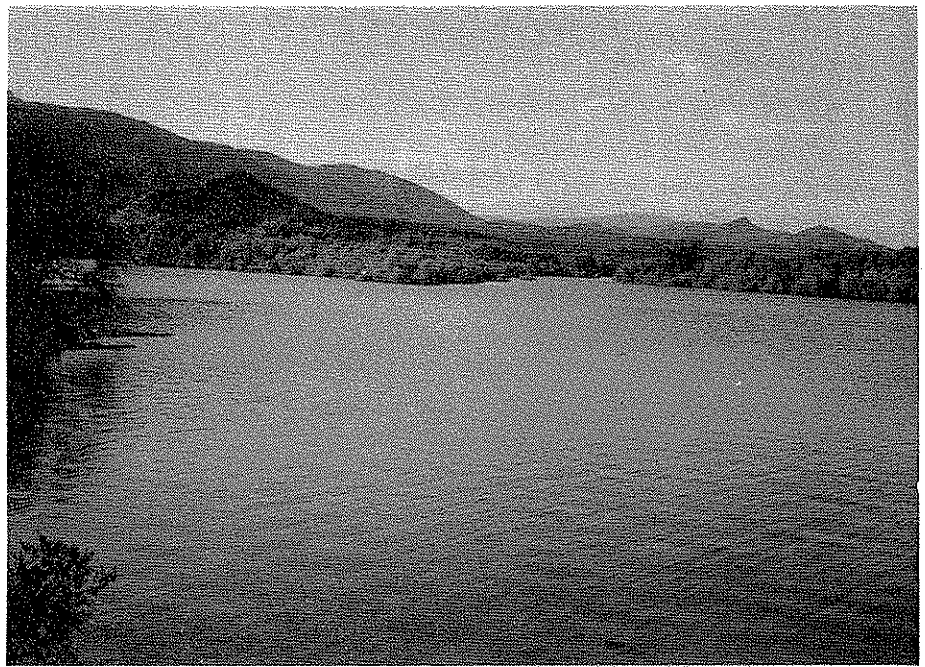
~ FR269 Overlook into Sheep Bridge area ~

Boaters who frequent this section should consider, however, alternating their takeouts between Sheep and Horseshoe. There are advantages to both.

A Sheep exit will allow you to skip the lake and therefore shorten your time upon the water, but it may subject you to a longer and more unpredictable shuttle, especially when iffy weather and rotten road conditions prevail. Many a shuttle scheme has been stymied when the Agua Fria is running impassably high!

A Horseshoe exit provides a longer yet easier shuttle. You will also experience the final free flow of the Verde, and some surprises, before the Dam makes a lake around M. 141. Perhaps your flatwater cruise across the lake will allow you time for a peaceful transition from remoteness to the regularities of life!

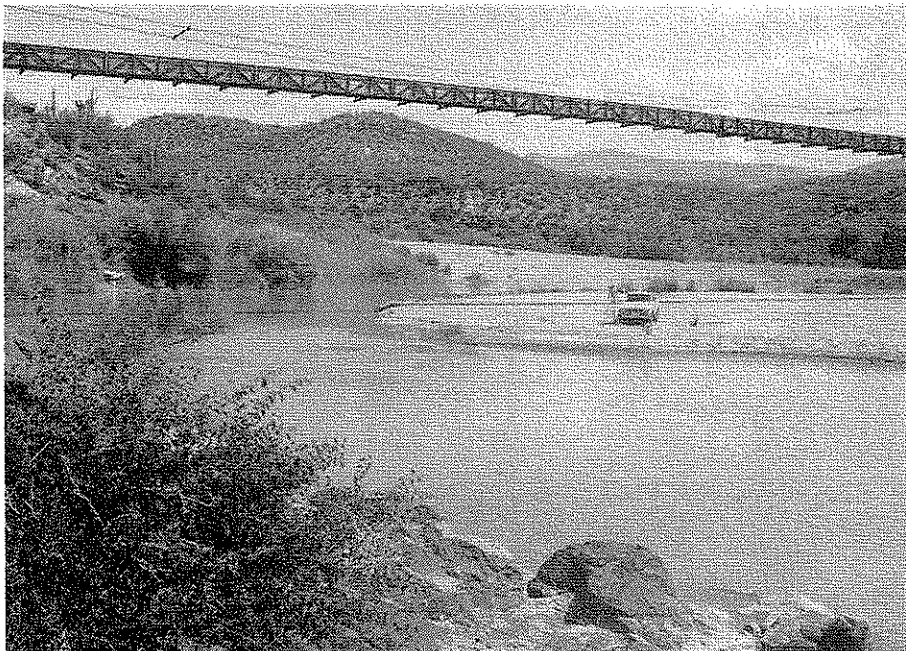
My bias is clear: I like Horseshoe. The only time that I plan a Sheep exit is when Horseshoe Lake is too low. Please see the Cautions section and River Mile Log.



~ Mile 142.5 - Horseshoe Lake - looking north ~

Sheep Bridge Access #1 from I-17 - About 2 miles south of Cordes Junction on Interstate 17, you'll see the Bloody Basin Road exit. Travel the Bloody Basin Road/FR 269 for about 35 miles to Sheep Bridge. During normal conditions, it will take two hours and a two-wheel drive vehicle will get you there. It is a pretty route with many panoramas and points of interest.

Sheep Bridge Access #2 from the Phoenix Area - From the town of Cave Creek, take Cave Creek Road east for 7 miles. Take a left on FR 24. Signs mark this junction well. Bearing right here would take you to Bartlett and Horseshoe Lakes, and bearing left will take you to Camp Creek, Seven Springs and eventually to your destination at Sheep Bridge. FR 24 is a highly used improved dirt road that is easily two-wheel accessible. It is, however, a jaw breaker of a washboard for the better part of its 35 miles down to the junction with the Bloody Basin Road/FR 269. Take a right at the junction. It is about 8 more miles to the bridge.



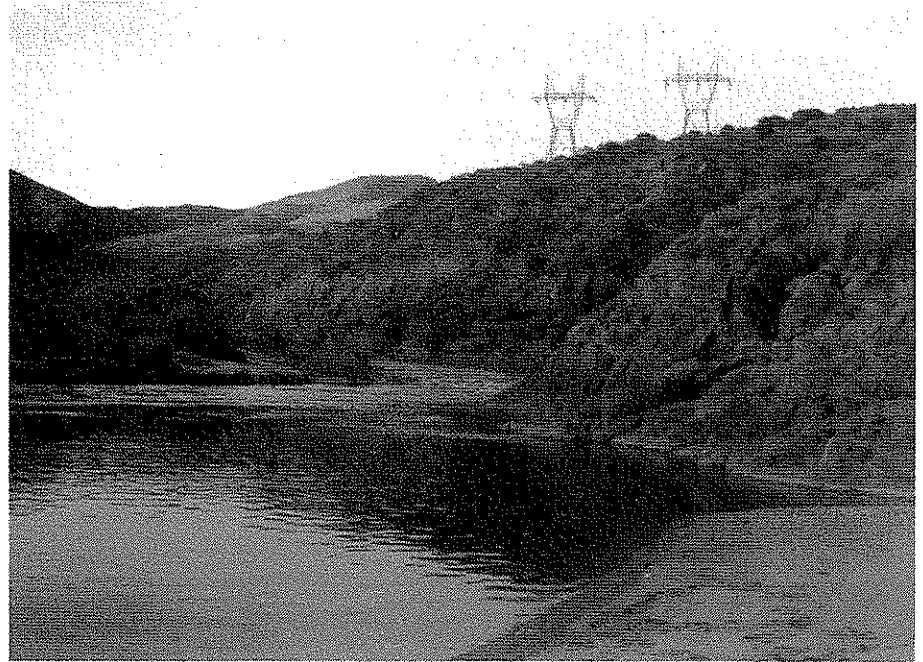
~ A view upstream from the Sheep RAP at Mile 139.1 ~

Horseshoe Lake Boat ramp (M. 149) - From the town of Cave Creek, take Cave Creek Road (FR 24) for 7 miles until you see the signs to the

right for FR 205 to Horseshoe and Bartlett. Drive about 7 more miles until you see the left to turn to Horseshoe. The Horseshoe Road (FR 205) is 11 miles of improved dirt easily passable by two-wheel drive. Wet weather will make it very slick, so use caution on the washboarded slopes and turns to avoid fishtailing vehicles and boat trailers.

A mile or so before you reach the boat ramp, you'll pass Horseshoe and Mesquite Recreation/Camping Areas—good RAPS for the float trip covered in the following chapter.

CAUTION: Be sure you call SRP before planning a Horseshoe take-out. If the lake is low, it may be impossible to reach the boat ramp due to the muck and sand flats.



~ Mile 107.0 - Upstream look from the northern boundary ~

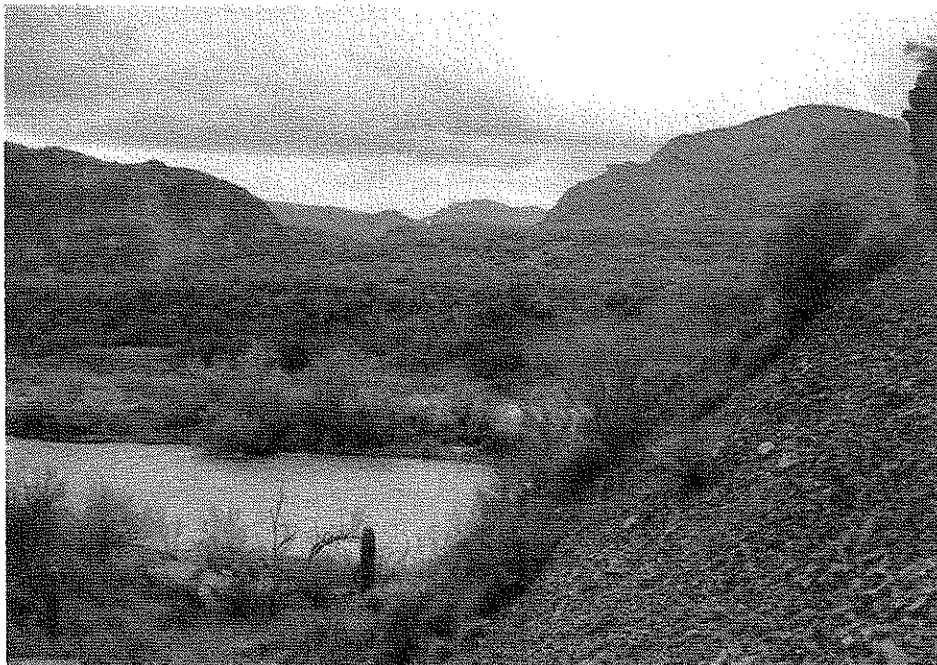
GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS, HIGHLIGHTS AND CAUTIONS

From M. 107 to Red Creek (M. 129.3), the Verde is Federally designated and protected as a "Wild" River. As you'll recall, the upstream stretch from Beasley to Childs is designated as "Scenic." Wild and Scenic do

most aptly describe this entire section. Except for Sheep Bridge and Horseshoe Lake, you are unlikely to encounter any other people except fellow floaters.

This is as remote as the Verde gets. Be prepared! Outside help may be days away.

Although there are fewer technical and steep rapids down here compared to the Beasley to Childs run, boaters will still be treated to enough Class II water to wet their thrill-seeking whistles.



~ Mile 126.5 - Beautifully remote ~

During higher flows (500+ cfs), most of the more challenging spots of this run are found in the first five miles. I have seen several boaters paddling, tracking and dejectedly walking back to Childs because the big water, inexperience and, perhaps, bad advice had found them with splashed and dashed hopes for a safe journey. One of these parties had hopelessly wrapped their canoe less than a mile into their trip at "Rock n' Middle" rapid.

Before casting off from Childs, take the time to scout the rapid immediately below. It is a narrow

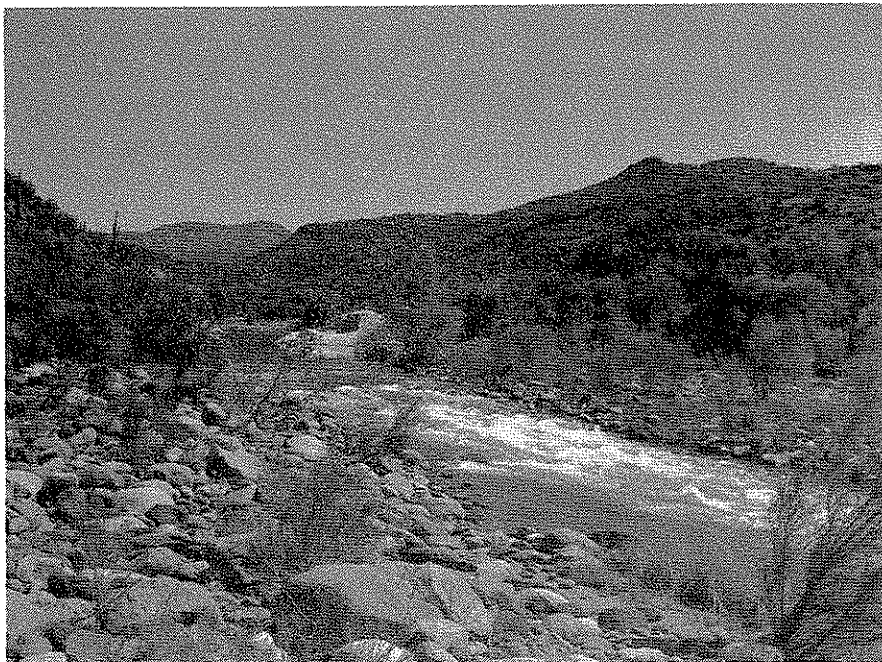
and rocky Class II with most of the characteristics of drops that you'll encounter for 30 or more miles. Countless heavily loaded and unsteady crews have lost it here in the "Child's Play" or "Game and Fish" rapid. Not the way any of us would envision beginning a wilderness trip!

If you scout "Child's Play" and decide to line or portage it, you should not even begin this trip!

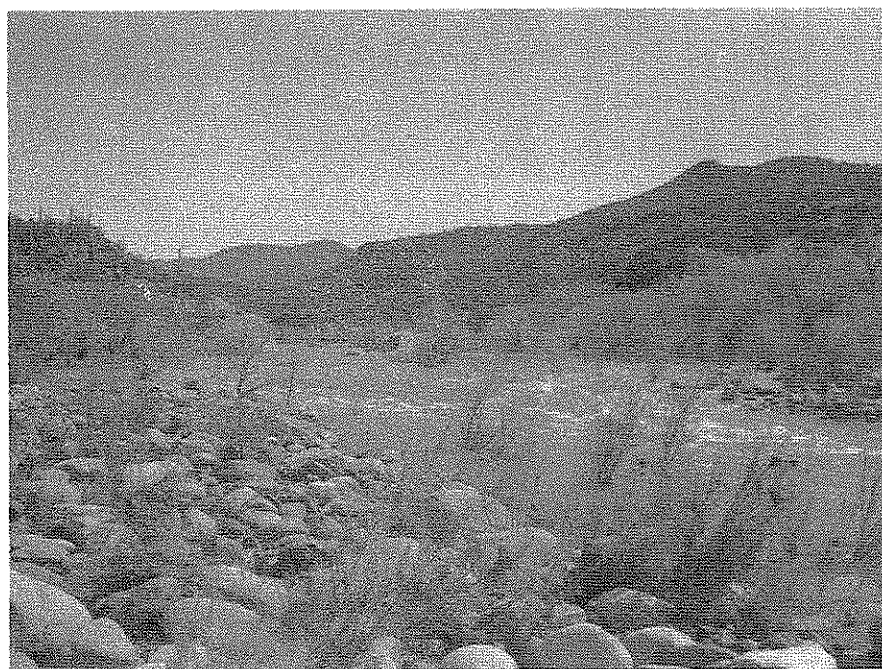
The Verde's channels and character are constantly changing. I'll try to note some of the more remarkable changes (e.g. from the floods of '93) in the River Log. It is simply amazing to witness the workings and reworkings of this wild and unimpeded River.

You've heard it before, but it requires a repeat: What you run and how you run it will greatly depend upon the level of flow. The following are some rudimentary safety reminders especially pertinent to boating in healthy cfs: Always scout if you are unfamiliar with what lies ahead, hug the inside bends of blind turns, stay away from strainers as though they were masses of slithering diamondbacks, be prepared to brace and lean in powerful eddies, lighten your bow and ride slower in the waves, always secure your gear, know how to ferry and avoid any broadside maneuvers, line or port when in doubt and always be properly dressed for a swim. It happens to all of us sometime, sooner or later.

There are cautions that pertain particularly to low water as well. More boulders are showing that could kick you broadside into a pin. Even slow flow can cause irretrievable wraps, so remember your downstream lean if ever you come upon a rock or strainer. Also, with less water comes more limited options for choosing a course. There are numerous places along this stretch where the only deep channel will be the one that heads into the trees of an undercut bank.



~ Mile 130.7 - "Split Shoot" - 300 cfs ~

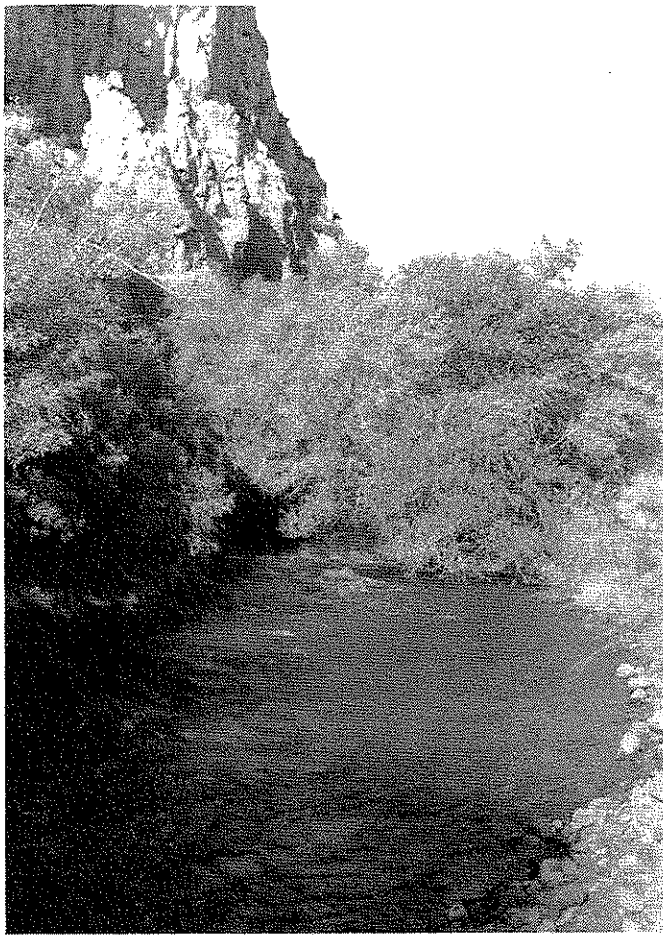


~ Mile 130.7 - "Split Shoot" - 3,000 cfs ~

Whenever you are unsure about being able to safely negotiate any debris-choked channel, it is advisable to walk or line your gear down the inside shore.

Slower currents, brilliant sun and superb scenery can easily put any boater into a less guarded frame of mind! Always be alert in any volume of flow.

The Mazatzal (pronounced "mad as hell!") Wilderness Area sprawls to the east from the power lines (M. 107) to just above Sheep Bridge, roughly encompass-



~ Mile 125.5 - Looking upstream at a severe low water hazard spot. ~

ing the Federally protected miles of the Verde. In fact, the Mazatzal Wilderness contributed mightily to the Verde attaining its "Wild" status. This 200,000 plus acre area is about as close as Arizona comes to having true and widespread wilderness. While you are here, you can easily access the Mazatzals via many creeks and drainages that enter the Verde from miles 110 to 140.

Fossil Creek and the East Verde River enter within the first seven miles, adding considerable water especially during springtime thawing and summer monsoons. These two major tributaries are great exploration areas and decent camping spots.

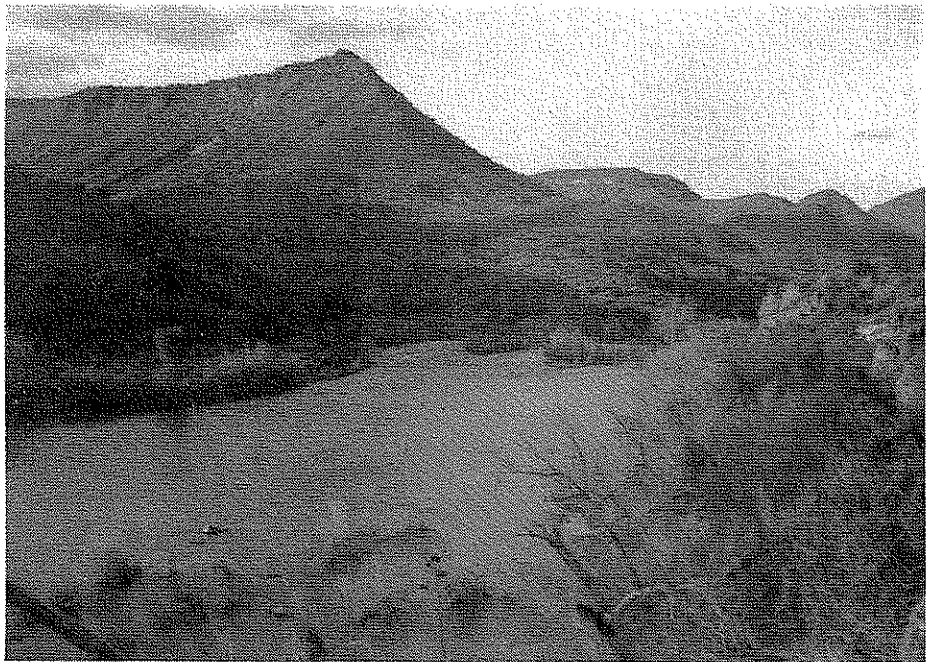
Fossil Creek originates from the Fossil Springs Wilderness Area north of Strawberry, and the East

Verde grows from multiple drainages off the Mogollon Rim north of Payson. Both enter the Verde on the left in a usually humble fashion that belies their importance as economic, recreational and natural resources for people well upstream.

The Muleshoe Bend region around M. 125 is one of my favorites. There are many great camping and day hiking places, and the upstream and downstream views are spectacular. It is similar in feel and allure to the Gospel Hollow area (around M. 100).

Have your binocs at the ready, coast quietly in the pools, rise early and you are likely to observe an incredible array of wildlife. This is a birder's paradise! Bald and golden eagles, osprey, herons, hawks, ducks, kingfishers, mergansers, doves, cormorants, coots, and falcons are just a few of the avian friends of the River that I have observed on almost all of my trips. With luck you may spot deer, javelina, fox, coyote, bobcat, mountain lion, beaver, and, my favorite, the gregarious and personable river otter.

It really is futile to try to describe the highlights of this beautiful and remote run in such limited space. The River, the season, the flora, the fauna, the rocks and landscapes, the vistas, the weather, the sky and moon and stars, the solitude, the unpredictables, the intangibles and the people will all create for you your own highlights when you run down the "Wild"



~ Mile 110 - Looking upstream at Ike's Backbone and the entrance of Fossil Creek - 3,000 cfs ~

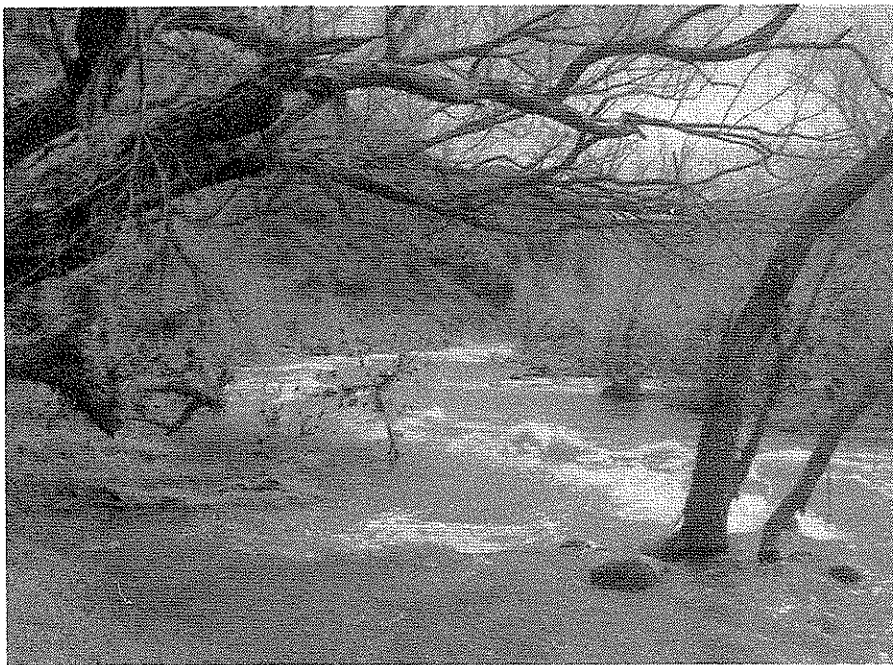
stretch. It is an awe inspiring place to be sure . . . so close to home, yet so far, far away!

RIVER MILE LOG

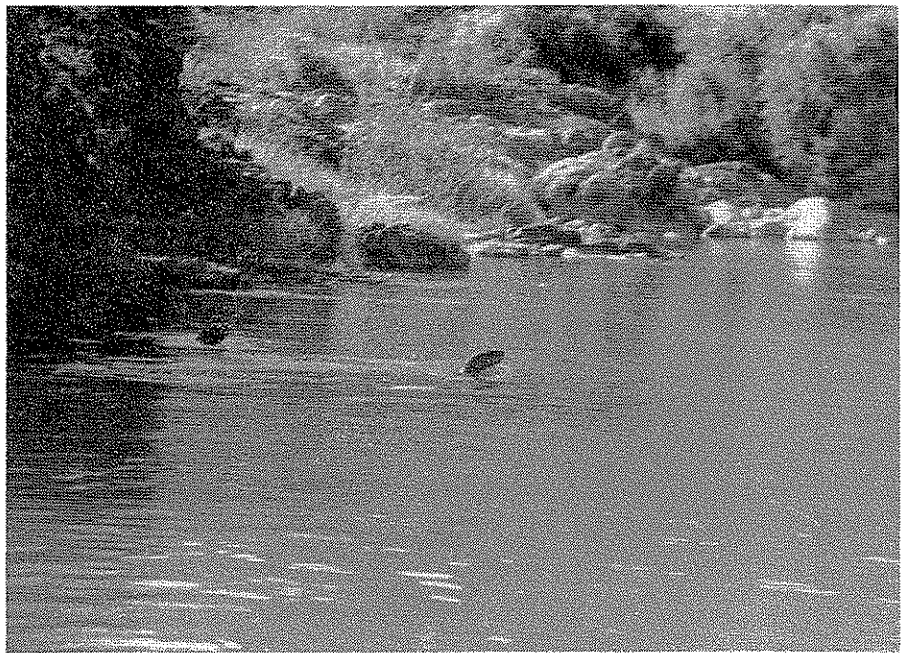
Mile 106.6 - The Childs RAP.

Mile 106.7 - Game and Fish or Child's Play rapid. Please refer back to the Cautions portion of this chapter. Heavily bloated tubers and heavily loaded canoes have had troubles here. Scout it down the left shore. Once you pass the narrow top opening, it is usually best to run it slightly right of center. Child's Play continues until about M. 106.8.

Mile 107.0 - Elevation 2,600 - You'll run a noteworthy Class I+ drop, go beneath the power line, zig to the right shore, hit a small riffle and then reach a truly significant and symbolic spot at M. 107.2. Here is the northern boundary of the "Wild" Verde. In all of Arizona, the Grand Canyon State, there is only one little sign like that one on the right. The Verde was added to the National List in 1988. Efforts are underway to get many more Arizona streams and rivers earmarked for protection, but as of 1996, this is it.



~ Mile 106.7 - "Game and Fish " or "Child's Play" Rapid ~

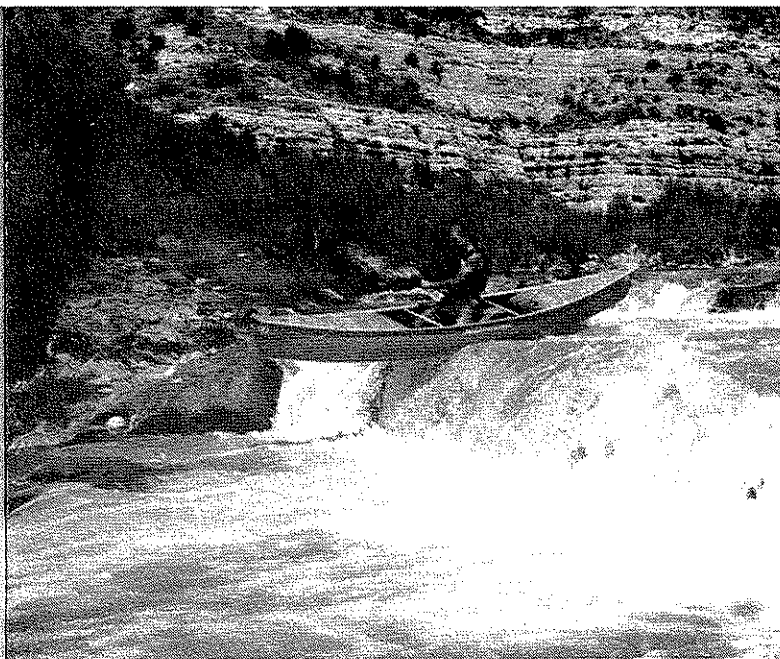


~ River Otter at Mile 139.5 ~

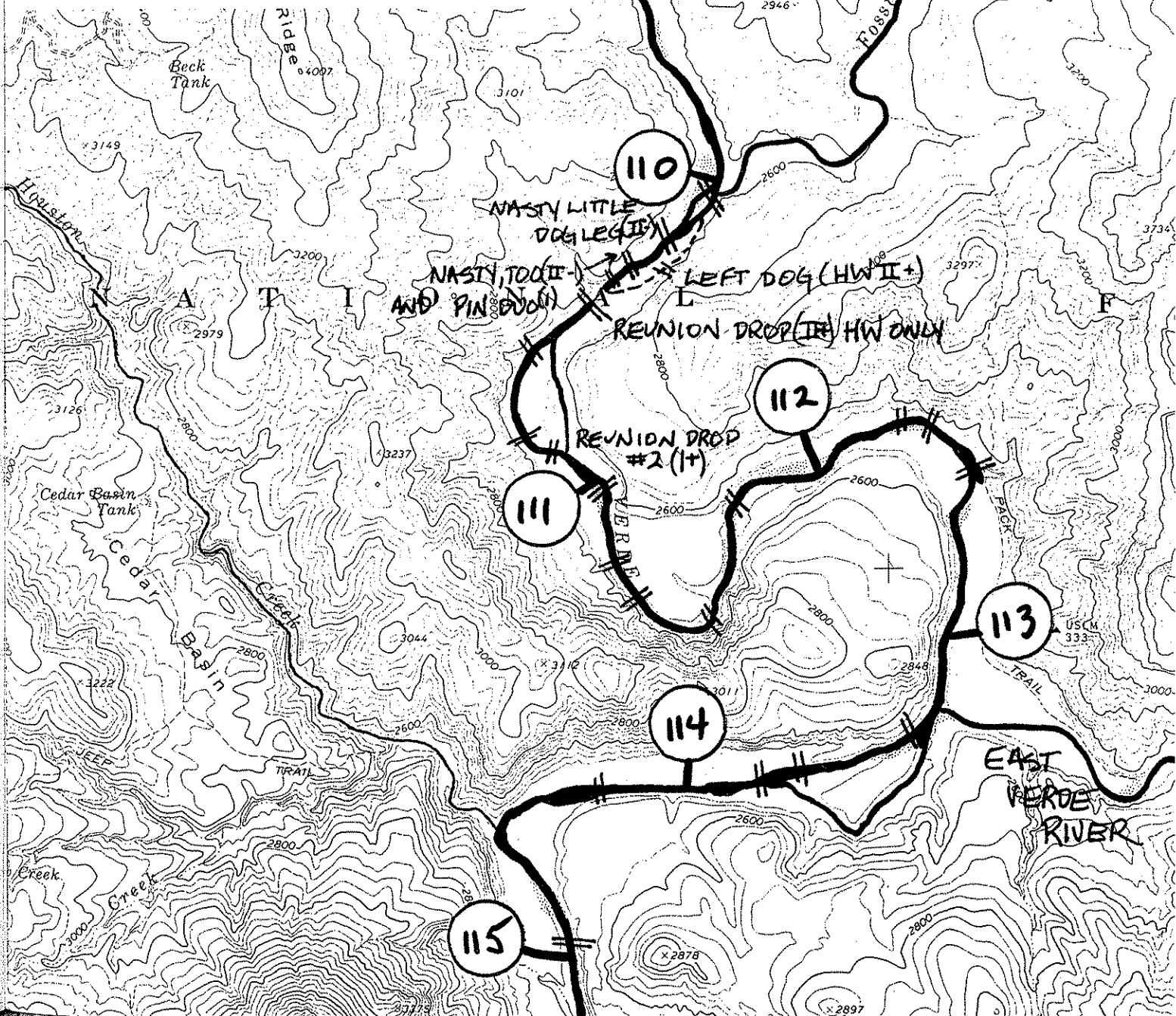
Advocates of riparian area preservation must pull together, both literally and figuratively, to help this sign continue to be the beacon of hope for increased efforts for adding more waterways to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

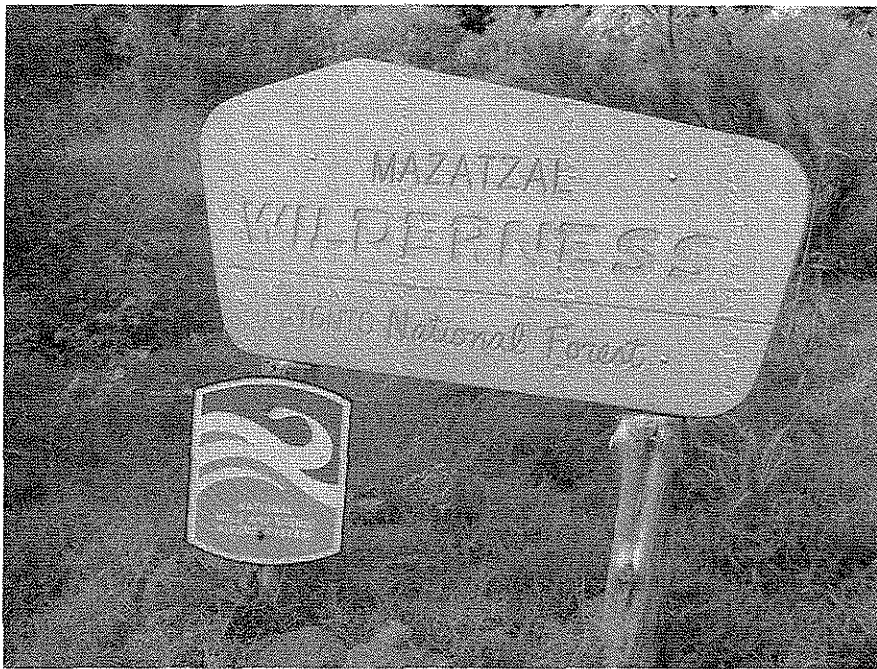
The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968: "Wild River Areas - Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America." Amen! Now, on down Arizona's one-of-a-kind . . .

Mile 107.5 - Rock 'n Middle Rapid. This tricky Class II rapid has claimed more than its share of victims because of the narrow and rocky top portion and the big rock itself. This rapid is one of those that is more technical in moderate to low flows (500 cfs or less). It takes some slick paddle work to avoid the rocks at the beginning, some of which could easily veer you broadside at a bad time. If you have the faintest doubts about getting safely down the upper lip, you should consider lining down the right side. If all goes well in the top, you'll want to immediately start to draw hard right to



~ Prefalls in Low Water Mile 91.3 ~





~ Mile 107.2 - A one-of-a-kind ~
safely skirt Rock 'n Middle itself.

Before I saw that beautiful canoe wrapped and thoroughly destroyed here in 1991, I hadn't given Rock n'

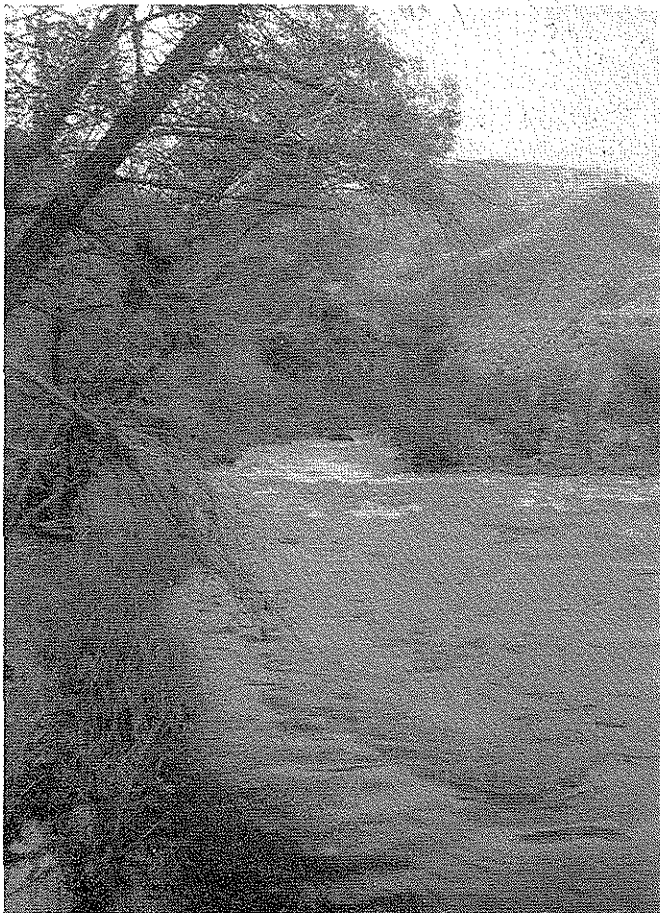
Middle more than the usual concern and caution! From then on my respect has grown for what could happen here. Please be careful.

Mile 107.6 - A small low water riffle.

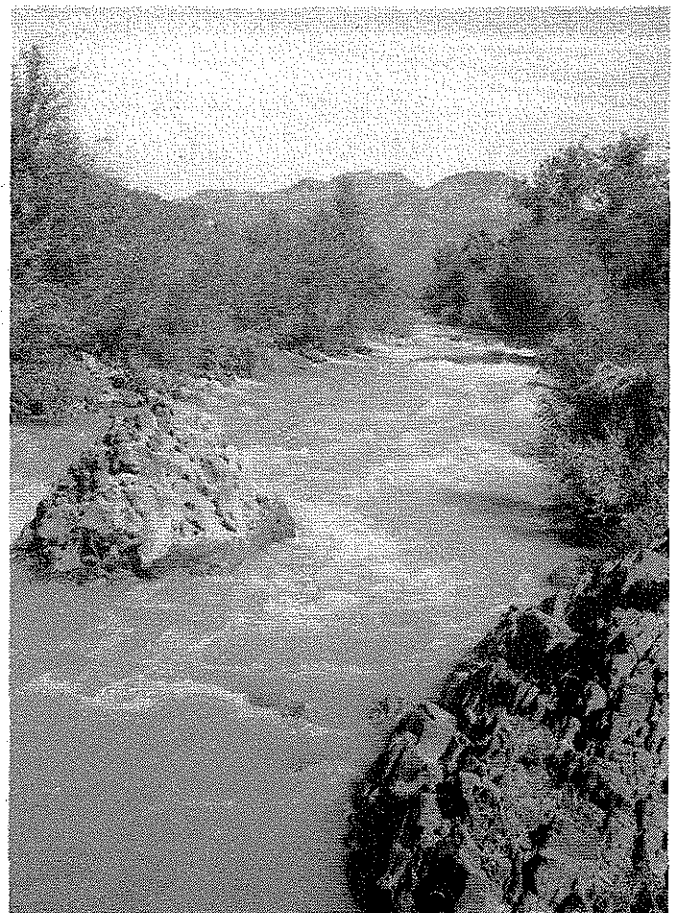
Mile 107.8 - Here is another Class II rapid that is worth a look, especially during lower flows when more keel catchers are exposed. Scout it from the left. You'll likely notice that it is best to set a left-of-center entry between the "Rocks at Top of Drop." There is a three-foot ledge and hole just right of center that could easily bury your bow.

Once past the lip, plan a left-side run to elude the several prominent boulders. This is an enjoyable little rapid that I call "Boulder-Studded."

Mile 108.0 - Elevation 2,580 - Just past M. 108.0,



~ Mile 107.5 - Rock n' Middle Rapid - 300 cfs -
Looking downstream at the entrance ~



~ Mile 107.5 - Rock n' Middle Rapid - 300 cfs -
Looking upstream ~

there is a long riffle. You'll then run a couple of chutes at M. 108.5 and two small drops prior to M. 109.0. Be cautious in all of these drops because of squirrely new channels and trees.

Mile 109.0 - Elevation 2,560 - From M. 109.0 to M. 109.5, the Verde slows and lends you time to take in the sights in a leisurely fashion. Ike's Backbone and Black Ridge rise 1,500 feet above the canyon floor to the east and west respectfully.

Mile 109.7 - Here is a newly-carved channel since early 1993. Where once there was nothing, boaters must now be aware of a chute with trees. It concludes with your first view of Squaw Butte.

Mile 110.0 - Elevation 2,540 - Fossil Creek enters on the left. This majestic tributary can be easily missed, especially during lower flows, as it enters at an acute angle. The extensive boulder fan and small riffle are testaments to the incredible power of the floods that have raged down the creek.

Mile 110.2 - The next half mile has to be one of the most intriguing and challenging regions of this entire run. I've run it left and right, prior to '93 and after the wholesale rearrangement of channels, and in levels from 200 cfs to 3,000+ cfs. Every trip has been different and practically indescribable.

At high water, experienced boaters may want to give the "Nasty Little Left Dog Leg" a try. It is an exhilarating roller coaster down the straight and narrow channel. At low water, only a trickle descends down "Left Dog," but by the eyeball from many aspects, it sure does appear to be dropping sooner and faster than the "Nasty" right channel. Who knows, but it is a possibility that the sediments



~ Mile 107.8 - "Rock at Top of Drop" - 300 - 400 cfs ~

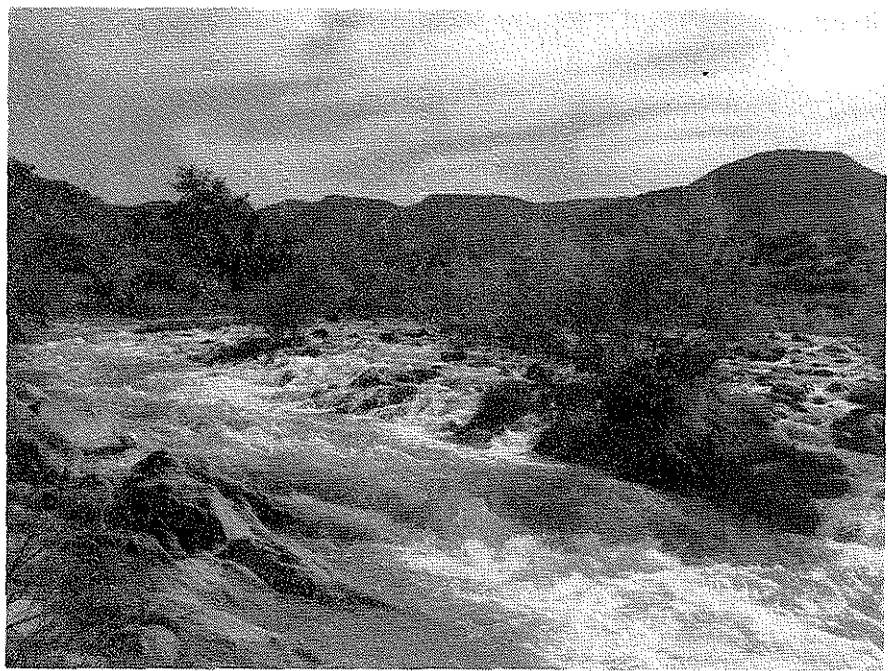


~ Mile 107.8 - "Boulder Studded" - 300 cfs ~

~ Notes ~

that divert most of the flow to the right at this time could shift and redirect the Verde to Left Dog someday.

With this speculation and digression aside, it is time to confront one of the most formidable rapids of this trip. Nasty Little Dog Leg should be scouted from the right. You can pull over when the river confronts a shallow rock and brush bar and jogs abruptly right. High waves and turbulence are here in higher flows. And, in lower flows, rocks that are difficult to avoid can cause problems and pins. The typical setup for a clean run is to catch the uppermost entrance on the far right. From there, you'll turn left and launch into the straight slot below the cascades on the left. In lower flows, it is best to plan to hit the final part left of center.

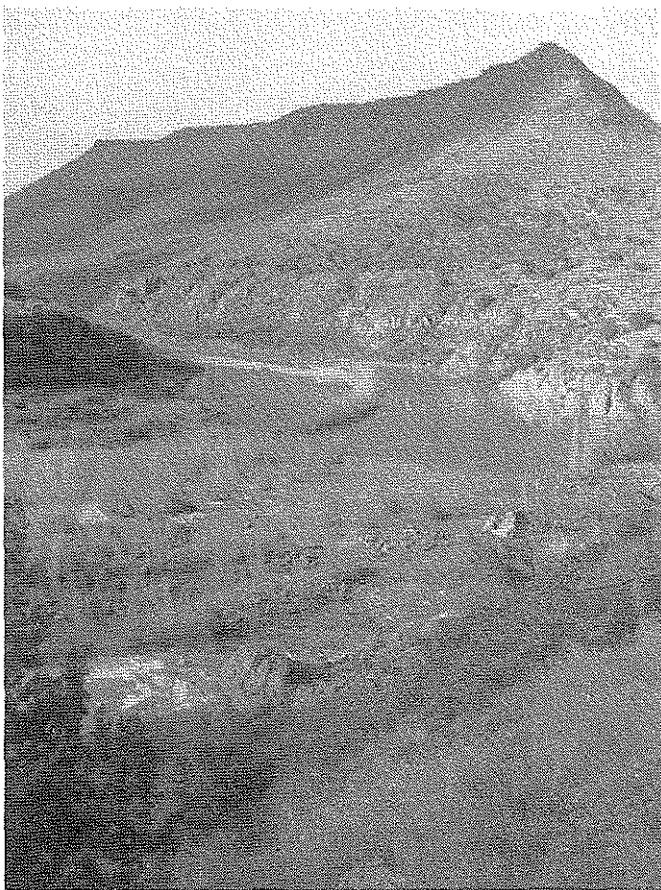


~ Mile 110.2 - "Nasty Little Dog Leg" Pre-1993 - 200 - 300 cfs ~

much for you, it is relatively easy to drag and line over the left part of the rock bar.

If the waves and required maneuvers look to be too

UPDATE: The floods of 1993 did remove some of the punch and challenge of Nasty Little Dog Leg, but enough remains to keep it a noteworthy Class II.



~ Mile 110.1 - Ike's Backbone, Fossil Creek to the right and the start of "Left Dog" in the foreground - 3,000 cfs ~

Mile 110.4 - Two swell little Class I+ rapids that I used to call "Nasty, Too" and "Pin Duo" no longer exist at this spot.

Mile 110.6 - Here is another place that is in a fascinating phase of transition. Where the "Left Dog" channel returns at M. 110.6, you will see a lot of water breaching the banks of the right channel and cascading down a very steep drop. This "Reunion Drop 1" is runnable only during very high flows. I tried it once in lower flows and ended up regretting my decision because of constant hang-ups and treacherous footing. It is best to continue down the main channel until "Reunion Drop 2" at M. 110.8. Watch for trees here.

From M. 110.8 to M. 111.0, the now singular Verde twists and turns in a pretty region of high slopes on the right and lush floodplain on the left. You'll float a couple of nifty little riffles as well.

Mile 111.0 - Elevation 2,520 - Right where the Verde turns to assert its southerly course again, you might encounter a tricky spot. Plan to try to stay well right

of the rock.

After this spot, you'll run a series of delightful Class I rapids that have been enhanced since 1993.

Where the Verde takes one of its last defiant jogs to the north, be cautious of the big rock on the left.

The remainder of M. 111.0 is punctuated by two more small rapids at Miles 111.6 and 111.8. In higher flows, the chute at M. 111.8 should be run far right to avoid a wash up on the wall.

Mile 112.0 - Elevation 2,500.

Mile 112.3 - Here is a little chute and rock bar followed by a severe right turn at M. 112.4. This turn can be highlighted by powerful hydraulics and large waves during elevated flows. During lower flows, you'll have time to maneuver either to the left or right of the large center channel rock. By all means, remember your downstream lean if you should broach on any of these exposed obstacles.

Mile 112.5 - At this place where you run a small riffle, Forest Trail 11 comes very close to the Verde.

Mile 113.0 - Elevation 2,480.

Mile 113.2 - The East Verde River enters on the left. This is the largest of the Verde's tributaries, and it is well-deserving of its surname, River. Thousands of cfs of water enters here at times, as evidenced by the debris in trees and the deposits near the mouth. Even during the driest of seasons, I've seen at least a trickle embracing the main Verde. During high water times, you might entertain a whim of shouldering your boat a way upstream and putting on for a short East Verde run!

It is well worth your time to layover for a time and explore this trib. It is exceptionally beautiful and rugged and, due to the fact that the nearest motorized access is nearly twenty miles upstream at the LF Ranch, it is

virtually pristine and unspoiled. When my brother, Jon, and I backpacked from Camp Verde to Payson along the Verde and East Verde, we both agreed that the region between the confluence and the LF was the most spectacular leg of the journey.

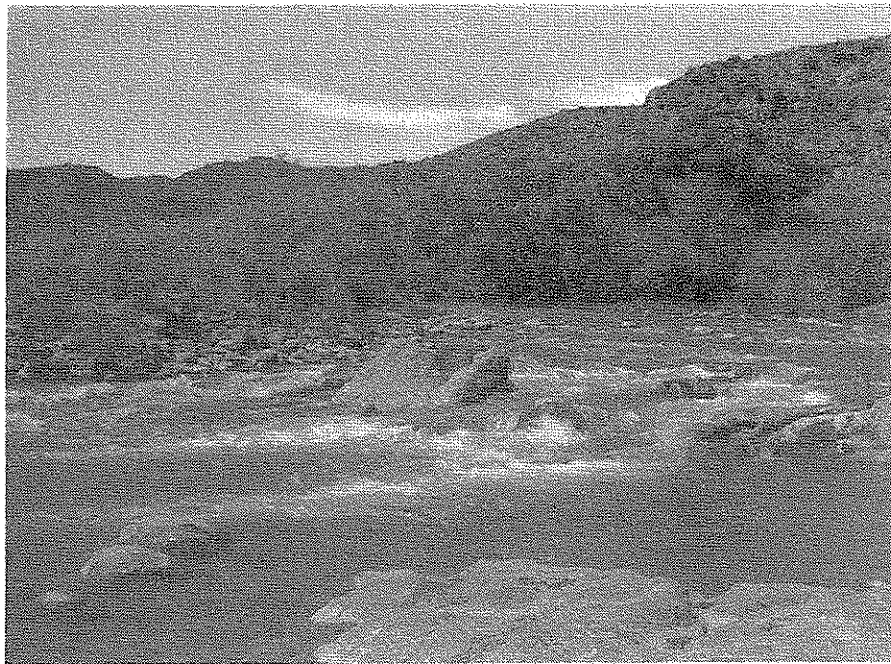
Just below the confluence, boaters should watch for trees that can cause problems in all levels of flow. Lining or dragging over the shore to the left of the trees would be a safe option. UPDATE: Floods scoured these strainers away in 1993.



~ M. 110.6 - Downstream from "Reunion Drop 1" at 300 cfs ~



~ M. 110.6 - Downstream from "Reunion Drop 1" at 3,000 cfs ~



may notice a small high water channel entering after its quiet meanderings from about M. 113.3.

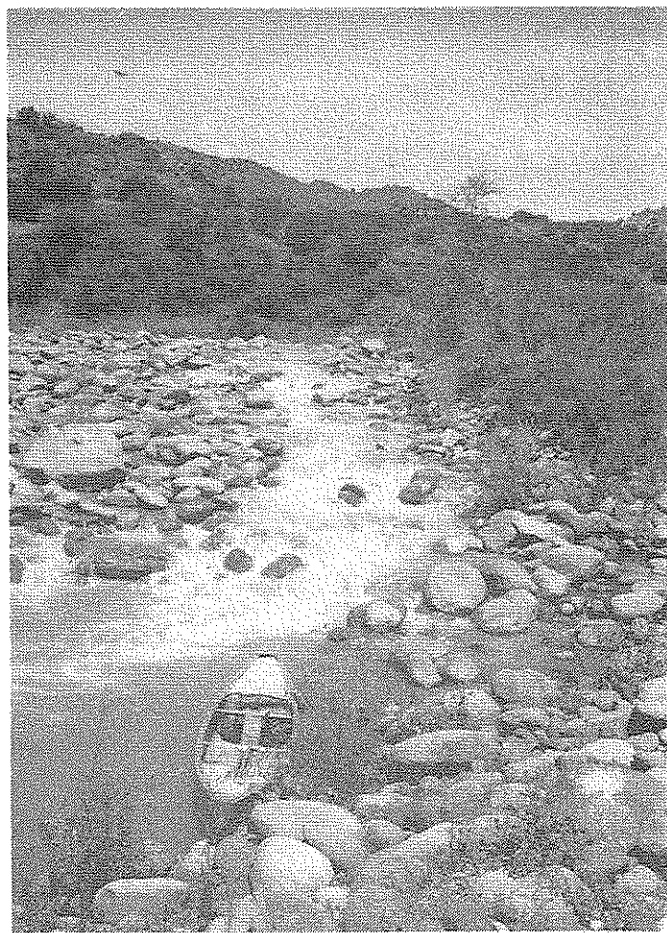
Mile 114.0 - Elevation 2,460 - You may want to set up right in this small rapid with trees.

Mile 114.3 - Here is a representative example of what you'll run during many miles of the remainder of this stretch. It is a fun little chute with rooster tails that can roller coaster you a bit. In high water, most of the rocks will be washed, but because of the constricting shores, you'll likely encounter a fun ride. Slightly right of center is the typical route here.

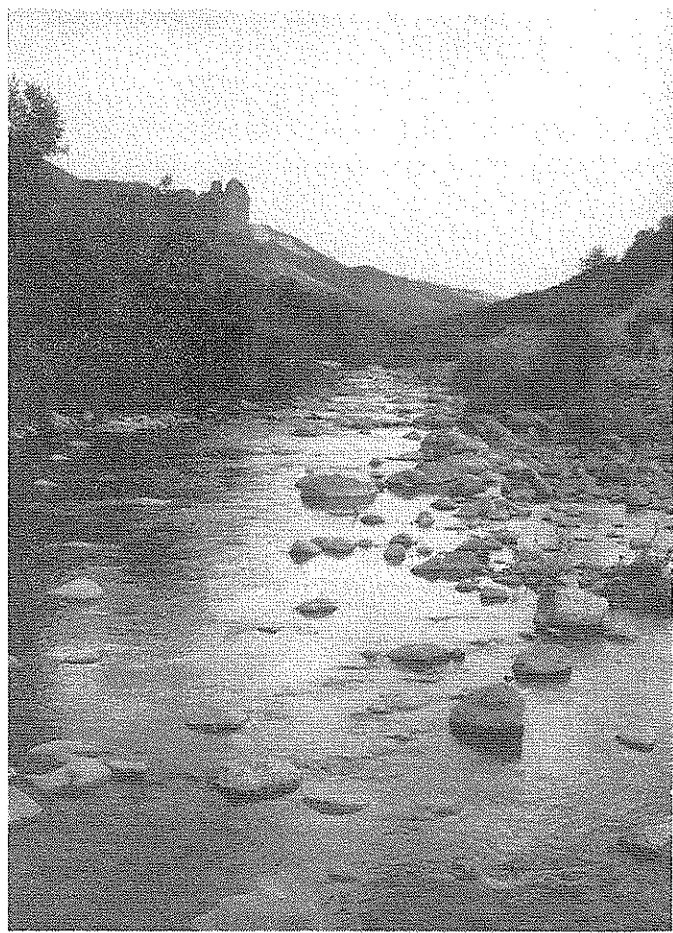
~ Mile 112.4 - Sharp turn at 200 cfs ~

Mile 113.8 - The beautiful pool ends with two little rock knocker drops. Look to left at this place and you

Mile 114.6 - Houston Creek enters on the downstream side of that blob of basalt on the right. This creek originates from the same locale upon the Verde



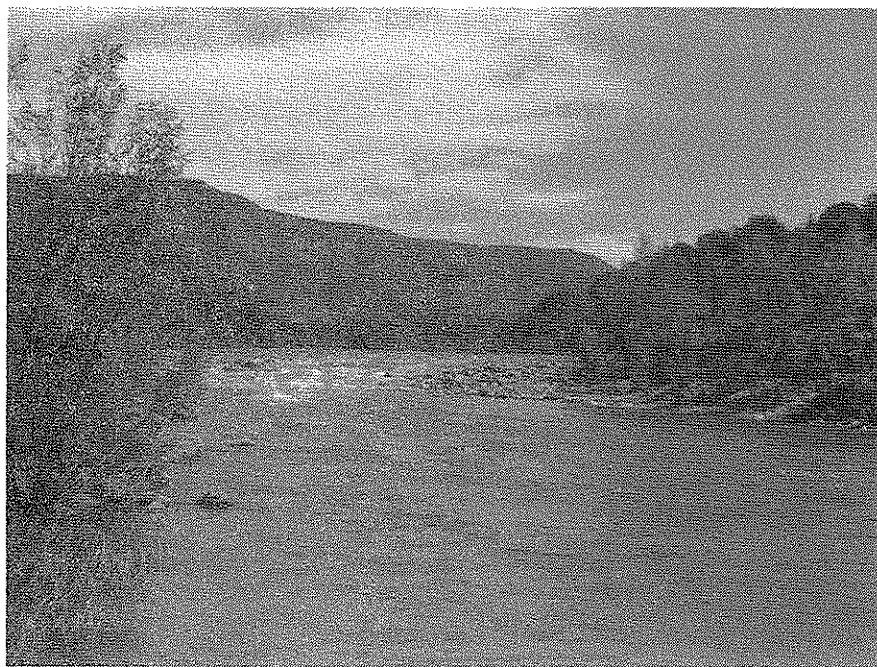
~ "Reunion Drop 1" - Mile 110.6 - 300 cfs -
"Left Dog" enters picture right ~



~ Mile 113.2 - Looking up the East Verde ~

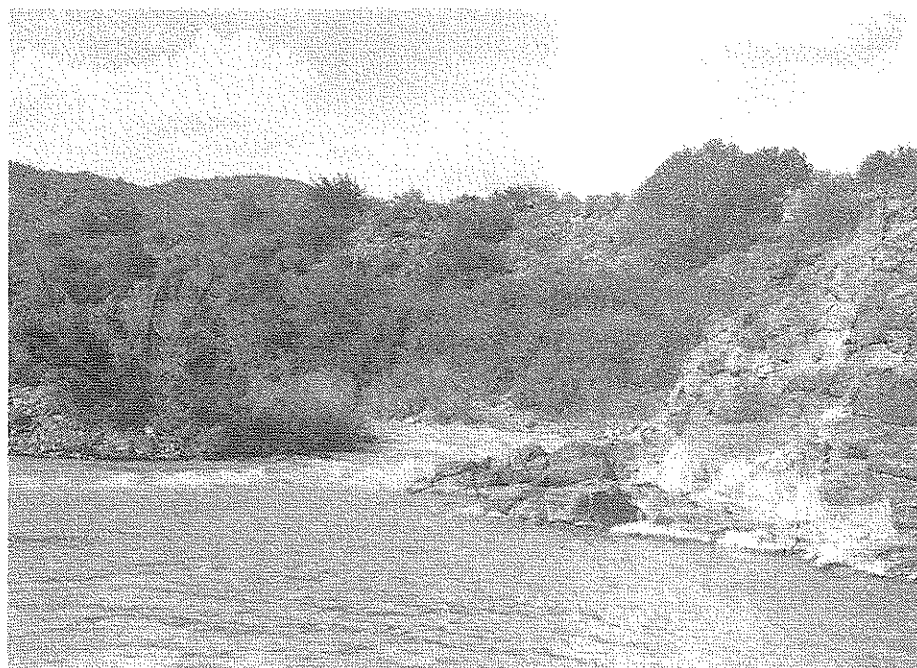
Rim/Pine Mountain Wilderness as Coldwater Creek, which enters the Verde near Mile 101.0. Houston Creek makes for a great first night's stop for smaller parties. Shaded and level camp spots are easy to come by, and the scenery up the creek is quite lovely. You are also about as close to Squaw Butte as you'll get. This prominent landmark and compass bearing provides expansive views for the few who take the time to scramble up her slopes.

Mile 115.0 - Elevation 2,440 - Here is a hodgepodge riffle that was nearly wiped out in 1993. Low water boaters may, however, still expect a drag-over or two here.



~ Mile 114.3 - A swell chute with waves - 300 cfs ~

~ Notes ~



~ Mile 115.8 - Nice Class II Rapid ~

Also, at M. 115.0, the Verde may show new split channels. During my last trip down in the fall of 1994, I went right. I don't recommend this! It was very low and obstructed, especially where it returns with the main left channel at M. 115.4.

You'll run a couple of easy drops at Miles 115.2 and 115.4. In high flow, these will go unnoticed. A couple of minutes below M. 115.4, there is a stand of charred sycamores on the left - remnants of a lightning strike or careless campers?

Mile 115.8 - Here is a significant Class II rapid that runs the length of



~ Mile 116.2 - Gauge, Trolley and Squaw Butte ~

the sweeping right turn. It is peppered with small rocks and holes and concludes with a nifty wave train.

Immediately below this rapid is a small drop with a prominent rock on the left.

Mile 116.0 - Elevation 2,420 - Lower water boaters may have a bow buried in the abrupt little plunge of this small drop at M. 116.0.

Mile 116.2 - Flow gauge and trolley cable. The gauge on the right is a remote flood warning gauge. SRP uses the readings from this gauge to help determine releases from Horseshoe some thirty miles downstream. It is not the gauge that provides the cfs data that you hear on the SRP flow line – “Into Horseshoe Lake.” That gauge is located at M. 139.7.

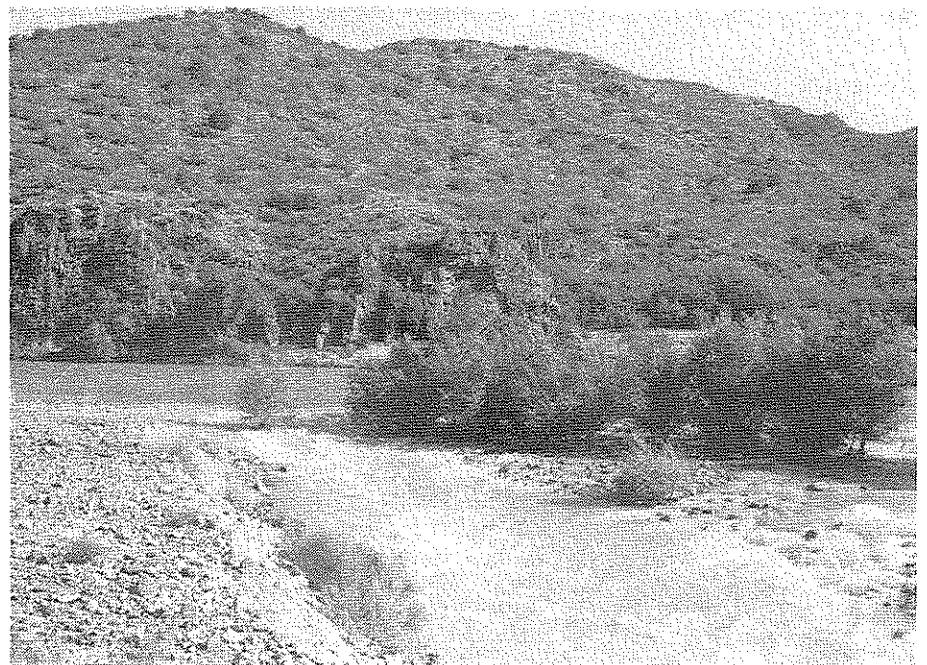
Mile 116.4 - You may run a minor low water riffle where the Verde jogs due west for a while.

Mile 116.8 - Redwall Rapid is announced by the, you guessed it, redwall formation. This is the first named rapid since Nasty, so you may have been anticipating more

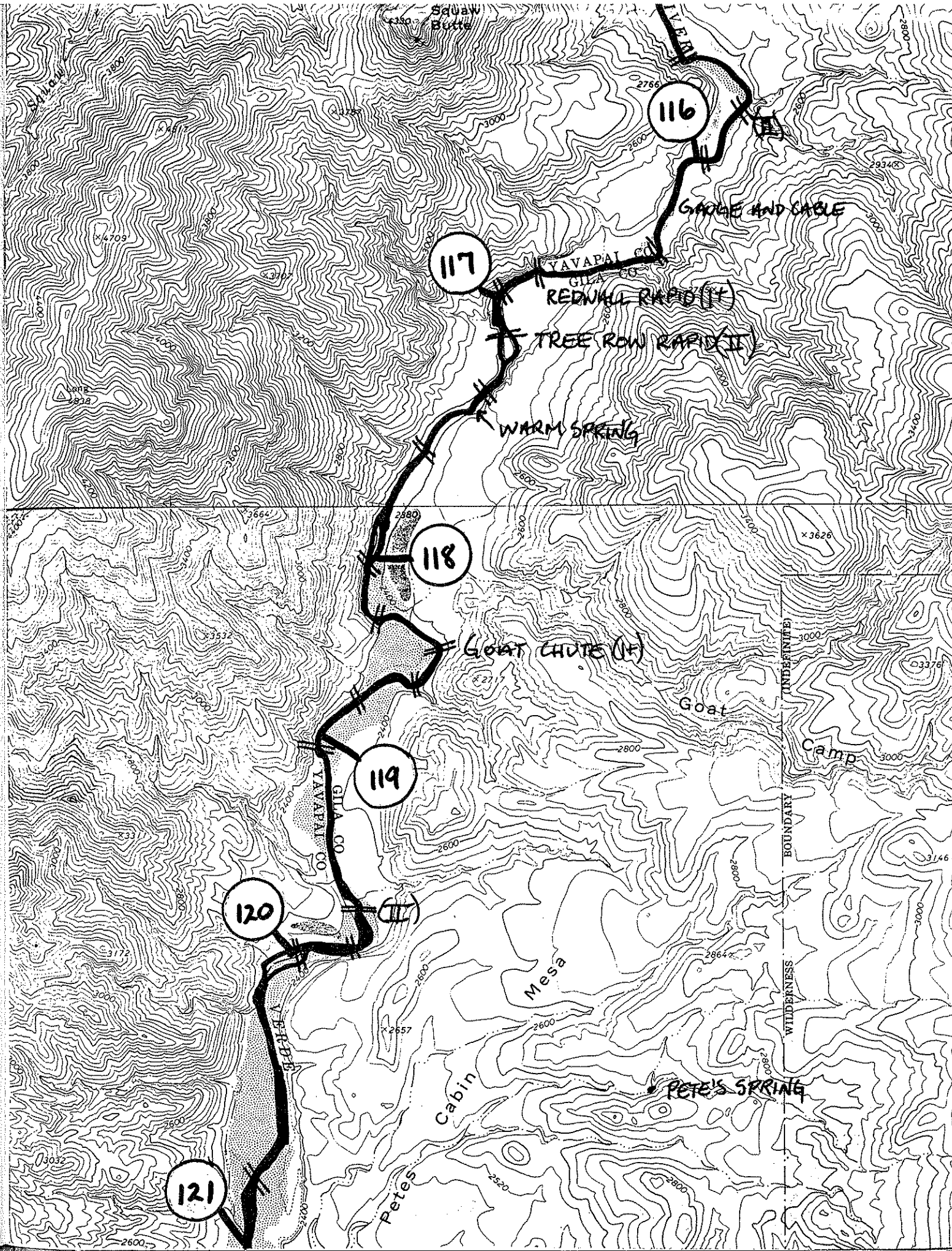
than you are likely to find here. This I+ rapid begins with a swift but straightforward chute. The trees at the top are easily missed in sluggish flows, but be careful during high water. Near the bottom of the chute, it is best to work left of center before reaching the left turn. It can be pushy here, and perhaps send the unwary towards Redwall itself. All in all, Redwall is quite ordinary compared to scores of no-namers up and down this stretch. Scout it from the right if you wish a look.

Mile 117.0 - Elevation 2,400 - The calm pool below Redwall concludes with a small chute.

Mile 117.1 - Tree Row Rapid. Tree Row has been revived into a legitimate Class II. Prior to 1993, it was hardly noticeable enough to warrant any name or classification, but now “Tree Row” is very apt! The trees in here can pose a very serious hazard to boaters during elevated flows and lower flows. The currents of the chutes can send boats right into strainers if paddlers do not set up well and make strong evasive maneuvers. It is worth your time to pull over and scout Tree Row.



~ Mile 116.8 - The entrance of Redwall Rapid ~



116

117

118

119

120

121

Squaw Butte

GAOGE AND CABLE

REDWALL RAPID (I)

TREE ROW RAPID (II)

WARM SPRINGS

GOAT CHUTE (II)

Goat

Camp

Mesa

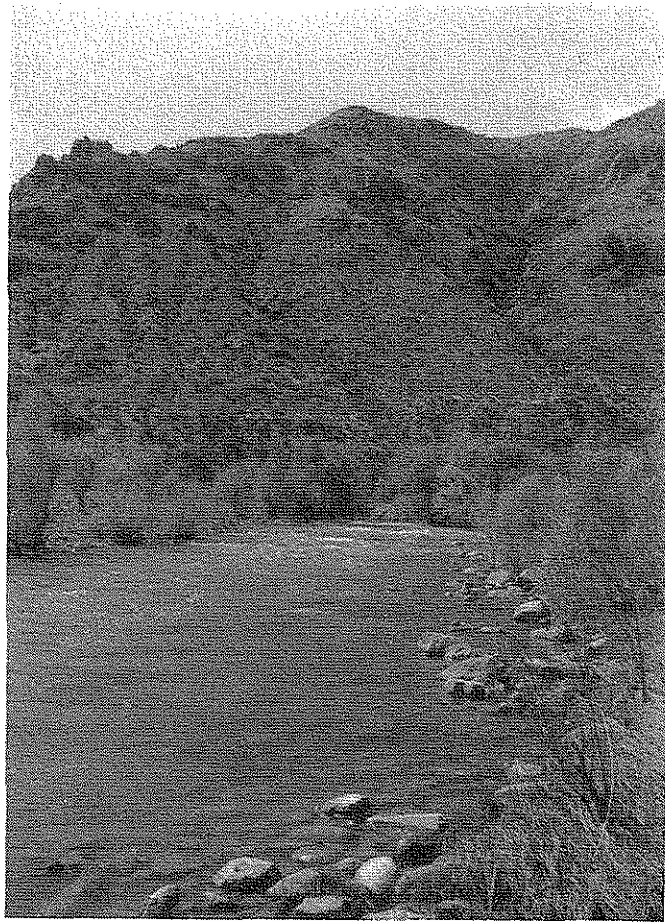
Cabin

Petes

PETE'S SPRING

UNDEFINITE BOUNDARY WILDERNESS

YAVAPAI CO
GILA CO



~ Mile 118.3 ~

Mile 117.3 - You'll enter an easy chute and then have to make a left turn before the wall. Just a short way down from here, look for a small warm spring on the left at or slightly above river level. River runners have made attempts at trapping some of the runoff. The tub is mighty small, but taking the time for a toe soak on a chilly day may be a creature comfort you'll not want to pass by.

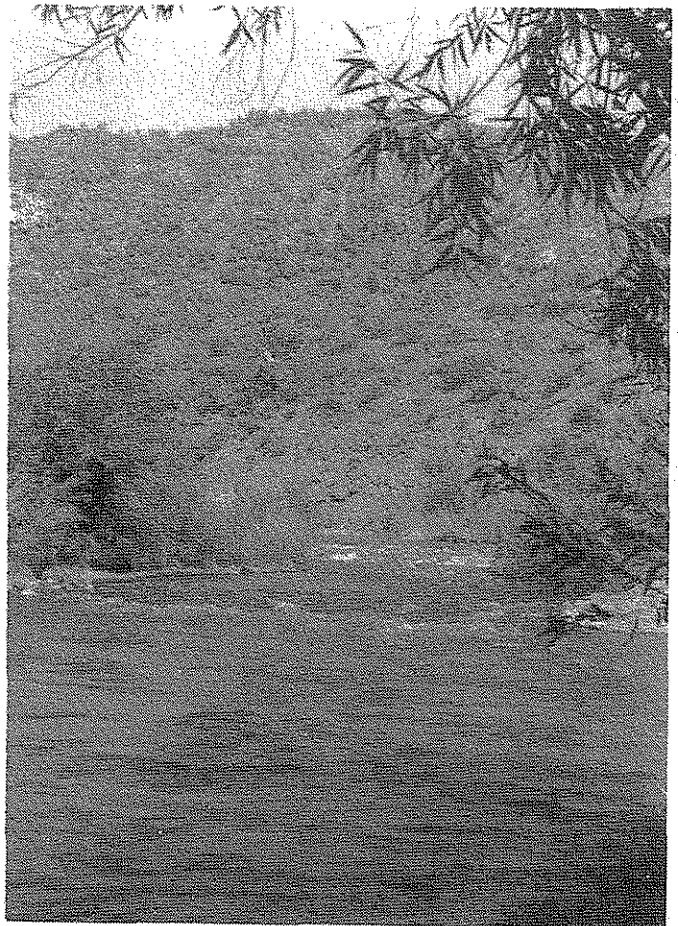
Mile 117.7 - During low water, you'll encounter a textbook example of why it is often best to catch the first and furthest upstream channel during braided riffles. There is an initial little drop to the right at M. 117.7 that may be your best choice. Although it is narrow and choked at the top, it is the only channel during lower flows that will allow clear going. Paddling to the left will leave you no choice but to drag down one of the myriad of threads over the rock bar. Places like this are always changing, so be sure to take a good look in the right channel before you descend. All of the flow reunites at M. 118.0 where you'll run a small rapid. It is lovely and pristine around here with ample choices for camps or layovers.

Mile 118.0 - Elevation 2,380 - Thirty or so feet above river level, you can see the trunk of a tree deposited during floods – another vivid example of the Verde's incredible potential. Just below this left turn, you'll float a mild riffle at M. 118.3.

Goat Camp Canyon and other smaller drainages have created numerous low water riffles between miles 118.4 and 119.0. The most noteworthy might be Goat Chute at M. 118.5. It is a narrowing Class I chute with some fun waves. Below Goat Camp, the Verde veers hard right. All of the little chutes and drops around here are buried and unnoticeable during medium to high flows.

Mile 119.0 - Elevation 2,360 - Watch for strainers where the River turns left just after M. 119.0. From M. 119.0 to M. 119.7 the current is sluggish while the Verde flows due south.

Mile 119.7 and 119.8 - It is at places like this that I shake my head and question myself and my foolhardy attempts at trying to accurately write descriptions of this mercurial River. Where once there was a gentle



~ Mile 118.5 - Goat Chute ~

and ordinary Class I rapid, there is now a significant and troublesome Class II rock-knocker and strainer-dodger in the recently created main right channel. Be cautious around this area during any level of flow.

A couple of smaller drops may be encountered at the abrupt left turn at M. 119.8 and just before M. 120.0.

There is a depression in the rock on the left at M. 119.8 that could serve as a nice foul weather respite or camp.

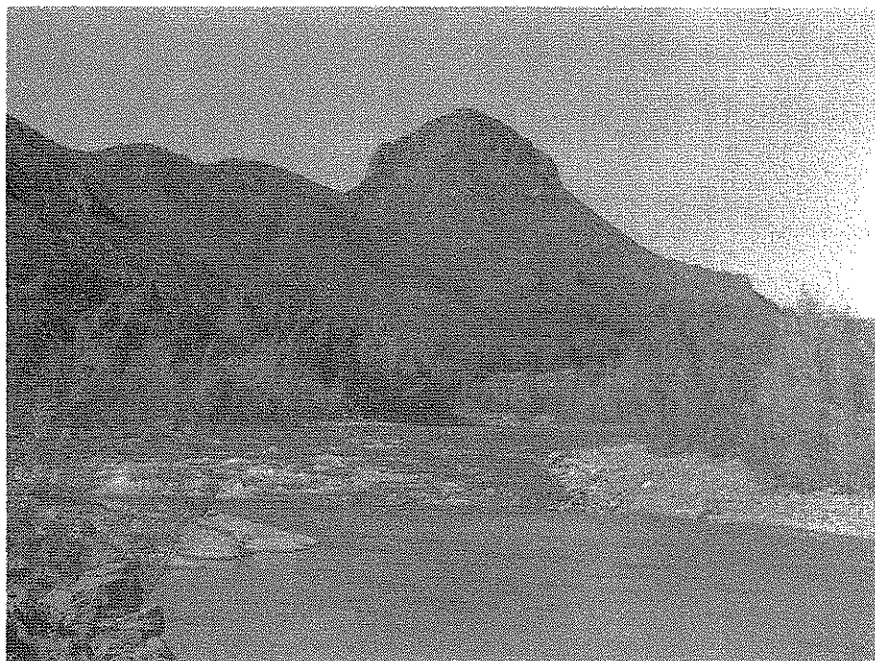
Mile 120.0 - Elevation 2,340 - The first half of M. 120.0 is pooled and slow. Around M. 120.4, the River splits and it is advisable to stay left. The waters converge again at M. 120.8, and you'll run a typical little drop.

Mile 121.0 - Elevation 2,330 - I wonder who Pete was?

Mile 121.3 - Forest Trail 11 crosses the River near here. FR 11 is significant primarily because it is the only mapped trail providing access into the heart of this protected stretch. From its trailhead at Sheep Bridge to its ascent out at Fossil Creek, it crosses the River twice - here at M. 121.3 and at Red Creek.

From M. 121.3 to 121.7, you'll run numerous little riffles during low water. You may find some holes and waves, such as M. 121.5, that could water you down during high flows. At M. 121.8, you'll see a sentinel rock.

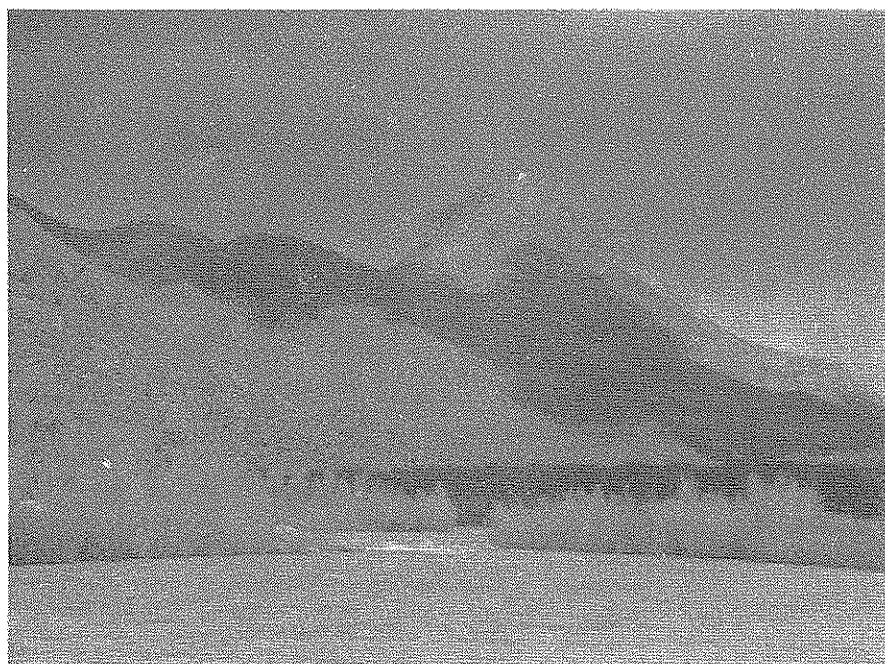
Mile 122.0 - Elevation 2,310 - Floods have cleared out the trees in this place, leaving an ordinary little riffle. Look to your left near here and perhaps you'll notice an old wood and canvas kayak (AZ-0480-HM). In September of 1994, I placed it on higher ground with the hopes of it remaining as a point of interest for years to come.



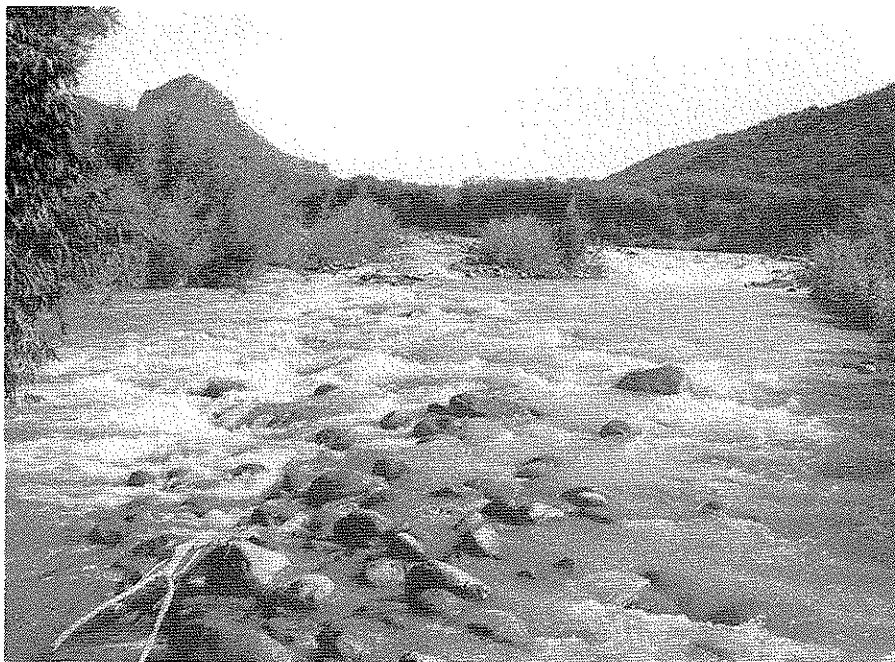
~ Mile 119.7 - Squaw Butte - 300 cfs - Pre '93 ~

Mile 122.3 - You'll notice on your topos that the region to the west is called Canoe Mesa. I'm unsure of the origin of the name, but it sure is appropriate because some of the most scenic miles of this entire run are awaiting you from the seat of your boat. I always take it slowly through the Canoe Mesa and Muleshoe region. Great campsites are easy to come by.

At M. 122.3, you'll begin a long steady rapid that can have some Class I+ waves and holes during decent



~ Mile 119.7 - Squaw Butte - 3,000 cfs - Pre '93 ~



~ Mile 119.7 - New Class II - 300 cfs - Post '93 ~

flows. The view down this drop frames the striking limestone cliffs and hoodoo formations. "Who Do Drop" concludes with a right turn into a slow water straightaway. Around M. 122.5, watch for overhung trees in the right turn.

Mile 122.8 - This little s-curve can be tricky. There are rocks, squirrely currents and low water holes that can be deceptively creative with you and your boat.

Mile 123.0 - Elevation 2,290 - Canyon Creek arrives on the left.

Mile 123.2 - Gauntlet Rapids begin. Gauntlet does have a menacing ring to it, perhaps like anticipating going through the spanking machine during your birthday party at age seven. In reality, it is not too much more than many unnamed drops above. Gauntlet does contain some trees if you mistakenly run too far left, and you will have to zig and zag to avoid the slew of rocks, holes and ledges as you descend the right of center main line. If you read the rapid well ahead, you'll have ample time to avoid any trouble spots.

The two-staged Gauntlet spanking concludes around M. 123.5. A couple

of smaller chutes and riffles may be run at M. 123.7 and 123.9 during lower water. Watch for trees just prior to M. 124.0.

Mile 124.0 - Elevation 2,270 - A couple of minutes below M. 124.0, you may find another low water chute with some trees and small holes. After the Verde turns and starts its southeasterly path into the notch of Muleshoe, you'll paddle a stretch of slow water. Prior to 1993, there used to be a slick and quick chute with obstacles at M. 124.5. The slower water ends at M. 124.9 and the Verde veers left of the rock bar into a little Class I rapid.

Mile 125.0 - Elevation 2,250 - Look ahead and you'll no doubt see the severe right turn at the wall. In healthy flows, it is advisable to set up far right. I've witnessed furious currents here. Running right over the point bar may cause a bump and grind, but it is the safest option. In lower water, you'll likely have no problem negotiating the turn.

Above this turn is a small sandy spot that is a favorite camp of mine. The first page of this chapter has a picture of the view. There is often a small spring drip-



~ Mile 122.3 ~

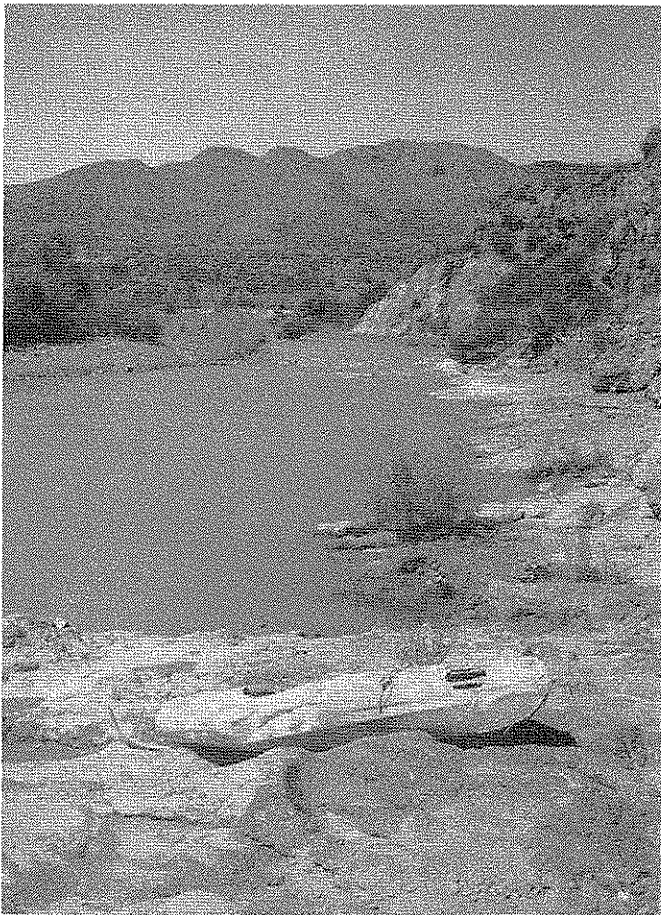


~ Mile 123.3 - Upper Gauntlet at about 3,000 cfs ~

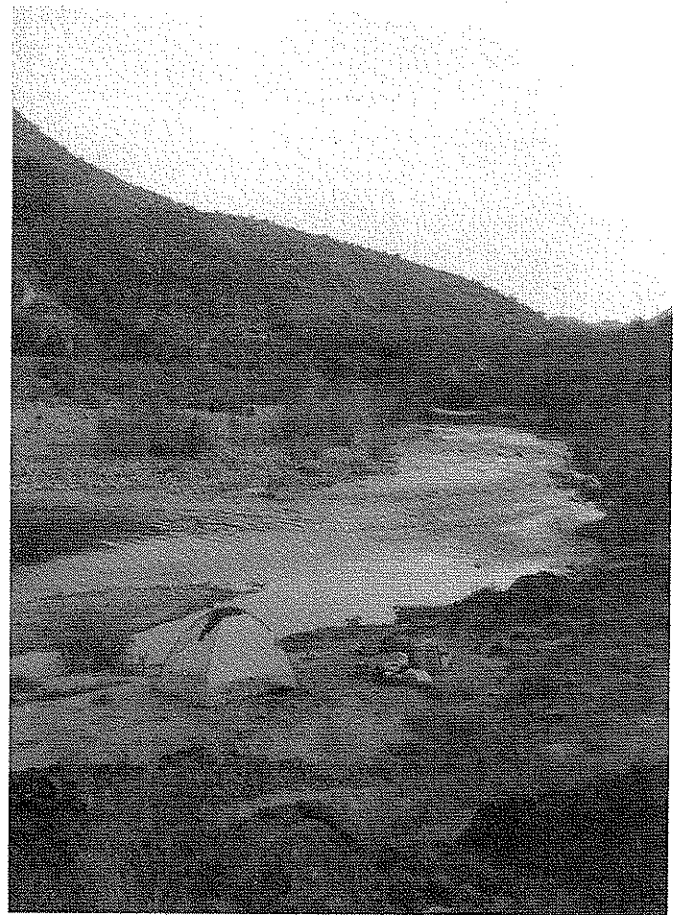
ping away under the nearby overhang. It is a great spot to take in the remote and peaceful character of Muleshoe.

Mile 125.3 - You'll notice the Bald Eagle Breeding Area sign on the right that cautions boaters not to stop during the next two miles from December 1st to June 30th. Also, the topos indicate an old Jeep Trail that follows a small drainage down to the river at this spot. I've seen nothing but game and foot trails, so I suspect this remnant is from by-gone days. If it did host vehicles in the past, it shall no more! The drainage has created a nice little Class I+ rapid. "Closure Riffle" is currently clearest from center left at the top to far right at the bottom.

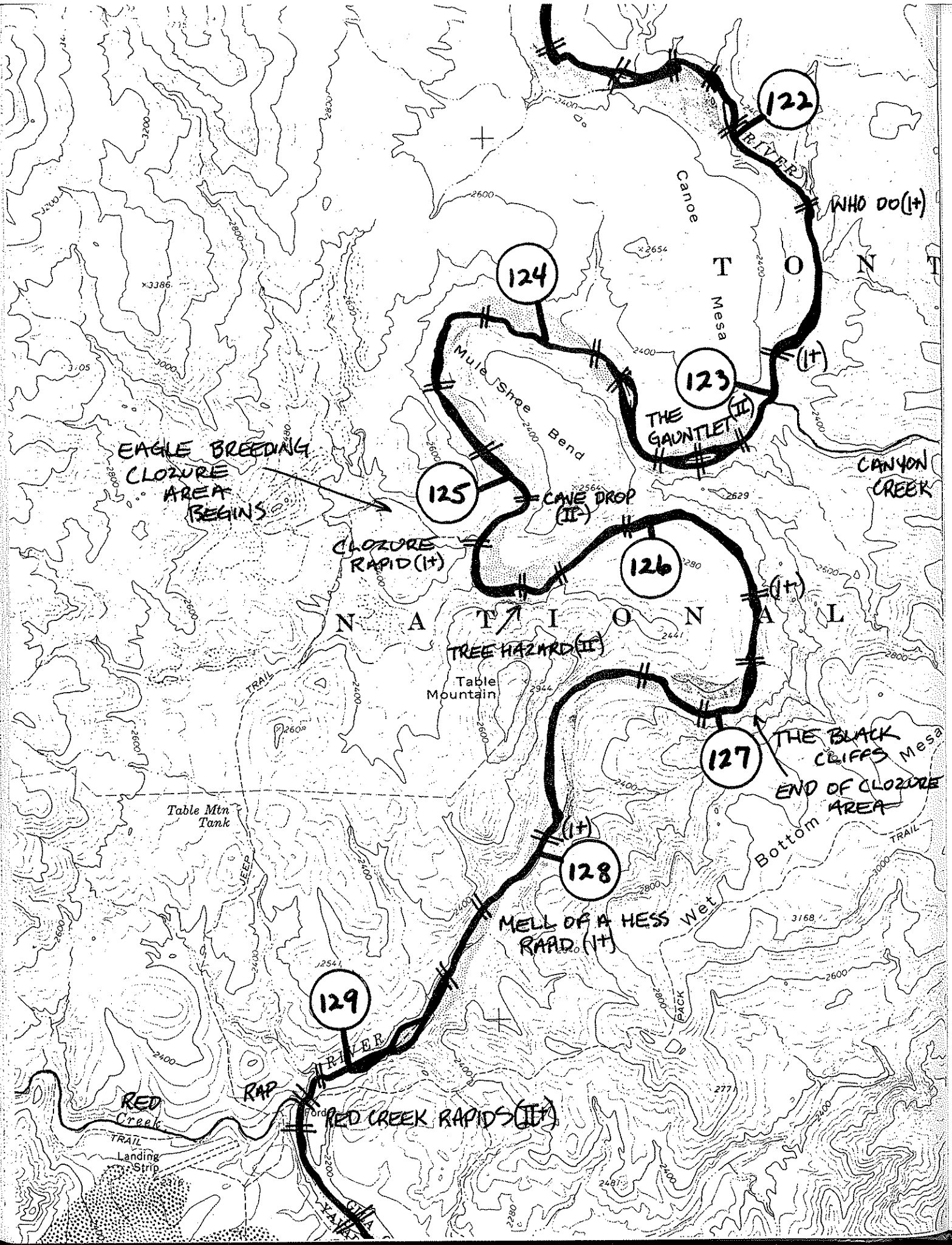
Mile 125.5 - After the River takes its easterly swing below the beautiful cliffs, low water boaters should take note at M. 125.5. The Verde pools behind a wide rock bar. The only place the flow goes is into a very tight and tree-choked channel on the right. Be careful! This is a



~ Mile 122.0 ~



~ Mile 125.3 - Closure Riffle ~



122

124

123

125

126

127

128

129

EAGLE BREEDING
CLOSURE
AREA
BEGINS

CLOSURE
RAPID (I+)

TREE HAZARD (II)

THE BLACK
CLIFFS MESA
END OF CLOSURE
AREA

MELL OF A HESS
RAAD. (I+)

RED CREEK RAPIDS (II)

Canoe

WHO DO (I+)

Mesa
TON

CANYON
CREEK

NATIIONAL

Table
Mountain

Table Mtn
Tank

Bottom
Area

RED
Creek

RAP

TRAIL
Landing
Strip

PACK

TRAIL

TRAIL

TRAIL



~ Mile 126.5 - Pre 1993 - Split Channel Drop - 200 cfs ~

classic low water Verde entrapment hazard that should be walked or lined by most boaters. During higher flows, you'll have enough room to take an unencumbered route to the left into the chute below.

Mile 125.6 - Now you are at a spot that high water boaters should be wary of. There can be powerful swirling currents that may require you to work hard to proceed and keep the rug from being pulled out from under you.

Mile 126.0 - Elevation 2,240 - Prior to M. 126.0, you may slide over a small riffle. After that, the current slackens until M. 126.5. More beautiful views can be had by scampering north from M. 126.0. You'll see just how close the Verde comes to doubling back on itself. In short (geologic) time, it is very possible that Muleshoe will become a perched meander, therefore shortening the Verde's length by two miles.

Mile 126.5 - The Verde used to do the splits here. Floods realigned the spot and unified the flow. Now you'll run a fun, twisted and rocky little Class I+. Just down from this drop, high water boaters would have

encountered an enormous reversal (easy enough to miss, if you wish) that I'm sure was a highlight of a play spot for skilled decked boaters. I believe this hole is history. A little riffle has taken its place.

Mile 127.0 - Elevation 2,230 - The river jogs west for a time, giving you face front views of prominent Table Mountain. The Black Cliffs to your left mark the end of the closure and restrictions area. Just past M. 127.0, low flow conditions will require you to cut right into a mellow rif. High water may create the usual eddies and swirls.

From M. 127.0 to just before M. 128, the River takes a leisurely left swing at the base of ever-so-close Table Mountain.

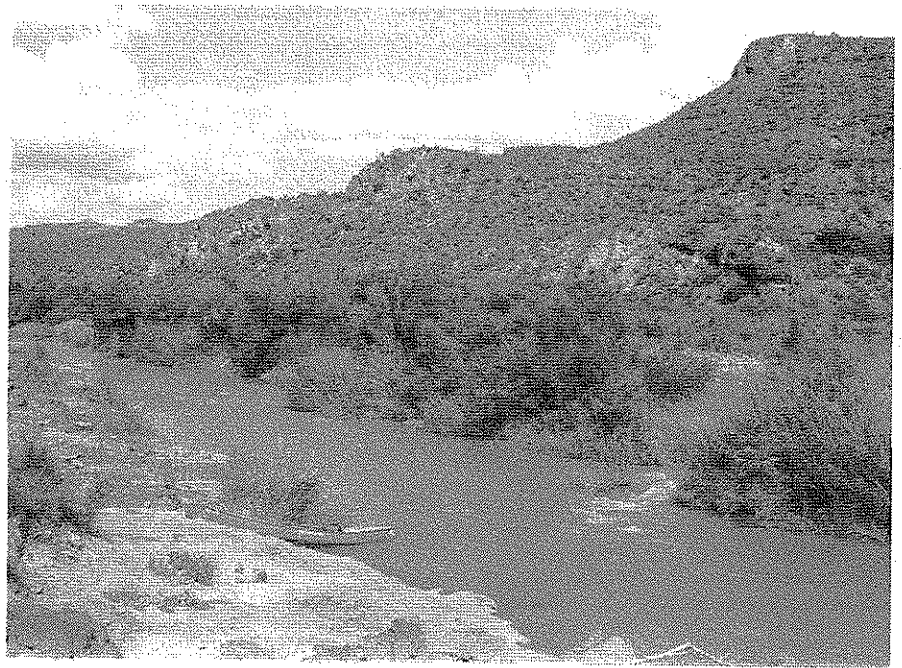
Mile 128.0 - Elevation 2,210 - Be watchful here because there is a sneaky chute with overhanging reeds, lateral currents and a large boulder near the bottom. If you set up wrong or get kicked by a rock, you could have trouble here. Running left of the boulder may be best.



~ Mile 126.8 - Table Mountain and a deep, powerful reversal - Pre '93 - 3,000 cfs ~

Mile 128.3 - Mell of a Hess Rapid. Floods have continually rearranged this ominously named spot. There is a possibility of strainers in the rather quick upper portions of this drop, and you are wise to scout or proceed very slowly. I've tried both left and right channels since the floods of 1993. The only noteworthy places are at the narrow entries, and then again where the channels merge. Because of the ample growth, the Verde could create a true Hell of a Mess here in the future.

Watch for more trees as you descend the chute at M. 128.6.



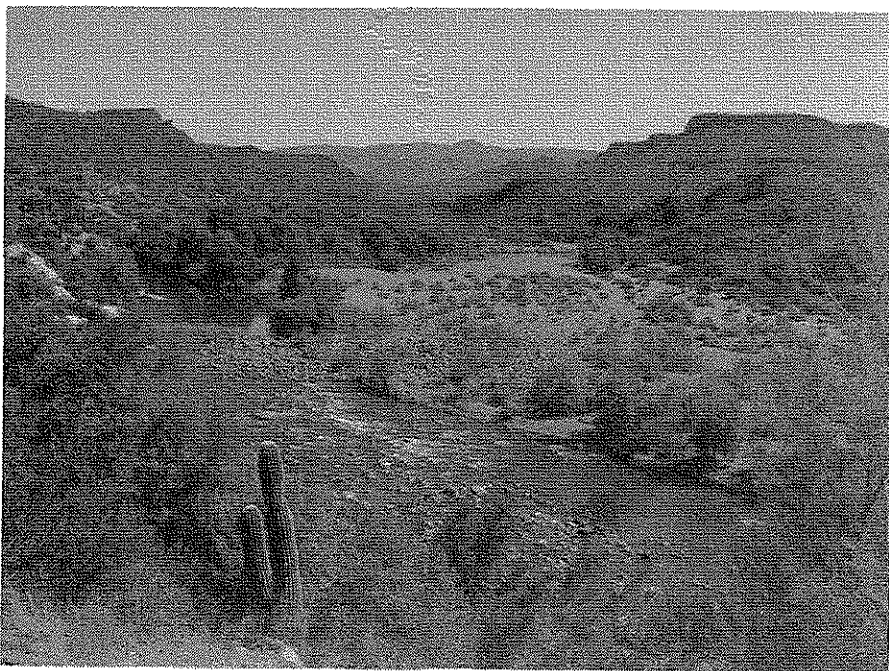
~ Mile 128.3 - Mell of a Hess channels merge - 300 cfs ~

Mile 129.0 - Elevation 2,190 - During low water, the narrow little channel at M. 129.1 may try to sweep you into the reeds at the outside of the turn. Draw left.

Mile 129.3 - Red Creek RAP and Rapids. Red Creek is noteworthy for a variety of reasons. The entrance of Red Creek on your right marks the spot where the Wild and Scenic designation ends. Ten more miles of beautiful river remain before Sheep Bridge, but they were nixed because of the road, ford and building found here at Red Creek.

The little cabin is usually open and nice views can be had from its front stoop. Inside the cabin, perhaps you'll notice a penciled note that states that visitors are welcome as long as they take care of the property.

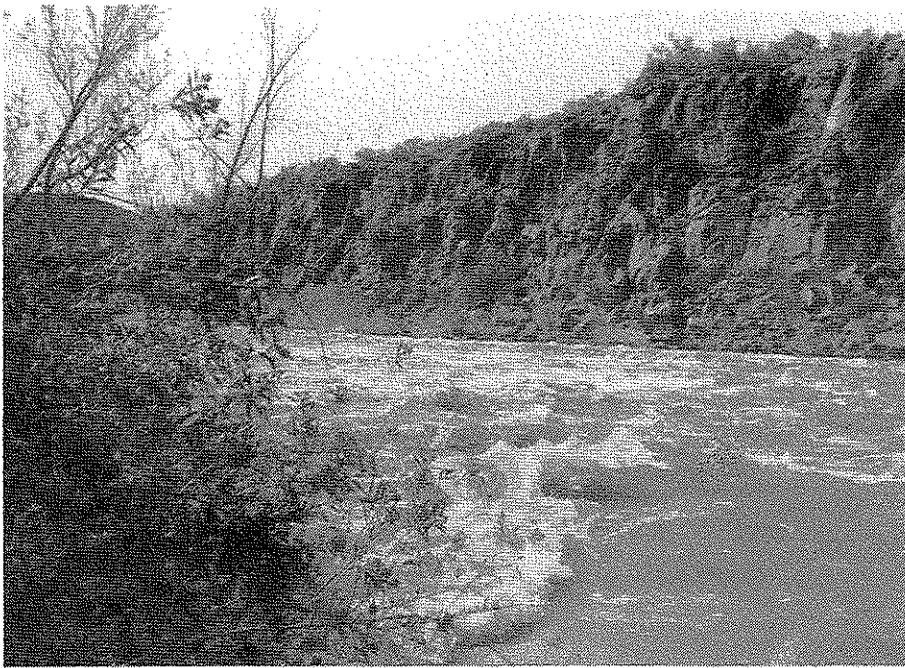
An off-road vehicle club has officially adopted the Red Creek RAP, and they are doing their best to maintain it and keep it clean. Although the tree-covered right shore looks mighty tempting as a camp location, you may want to bypass it in favor of less trampled benches found downstream.



~ Mile 129.3 - Upriver view of Red Creek Rapids at 200 cfs ~

Red Creek originates about fifteen miles northwest from here off the Verde Rim. It is a major drainage of this region, and enough runoff can flow down Red Creek to make the road impassable for extended periods of time.

Red Creek floods change the character of the rapids from season to season. During medium and high flows, Red Creek is a legitimate Class II that you are wise to scout. It is a lengthy and fun ride filled with decent waves and many small holes. There are a couple of potential pin spots in the last half that you should watch for, especially if the repeated plunge and splashes weighted you down. During lower



~ Mile 129.3 - Upper Red Creek Rapids at 3,000 cfs ~

flows, you'll be treated to a game of Verde dodge ball as you side slip and swivel in search of a clear course through the Red Creek rubble.

Below this rapid, you'll glide upon a lovely pool up to M. 129.8, where you'll likely encounter a small riffle.

Mile 130.0 - Elevation 2,180 - Between M. 130.0 and the entrance of Wet Bottom Creek, you may run a narrow and quick chute. Stay right to avoid the trees.

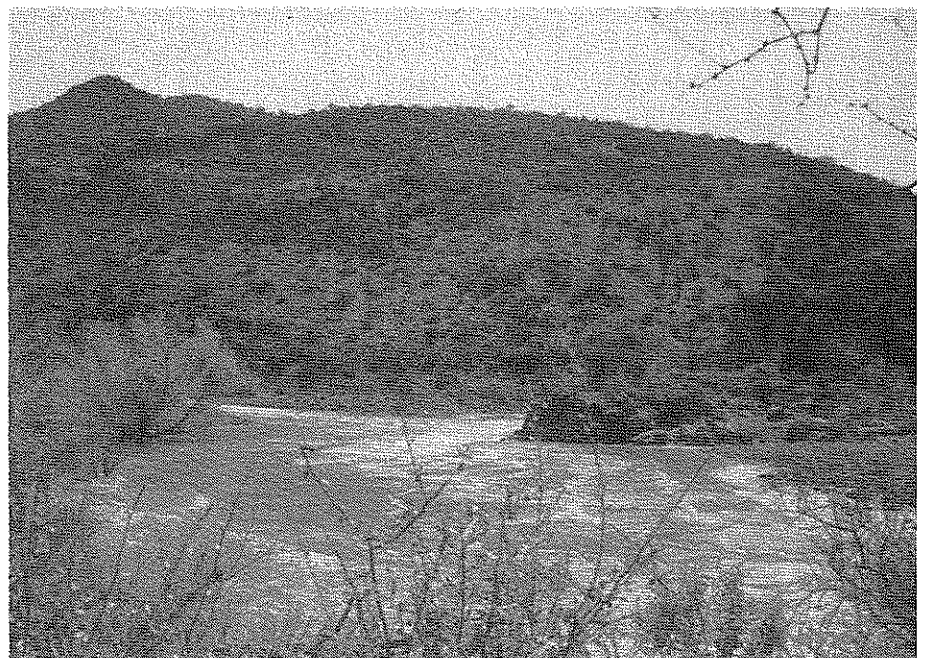
Mile 130.2 - Wet Bottom Creek enters on the left just upriver of that prominent rock formation. A nice shaded lunch or rest place is located here also. A hundred or so yards down, you'll be on the lookout for another rapid with a teeth-chattering and knee-knocking kind of name. Well, Wet As (yes, only one "s") Rapid is normally an area of small drops hardly worthy of mention. No doubt, Wet As got its name from the nearby Wet Bottom (get it?) Creek, but curiously it is not the debris from the Creek that can create the turbulence for boaters. In low and medium flows, there is very little to worry about here. In elevated flows, however, the river does some very

interesting things between M. 130.2 and M. 130.8. It is not a place of noteworthy drops, rocks or holes, but of incredibly powerful swirling currents, eddies and boils. During a run at 3,000 cfs, I was stuck in virtually the same spot at Mile 130.5 for over five minutes as I battled the currents with braces and leans. What a challenge it was to avoid succumbing to the old river rug trick here.

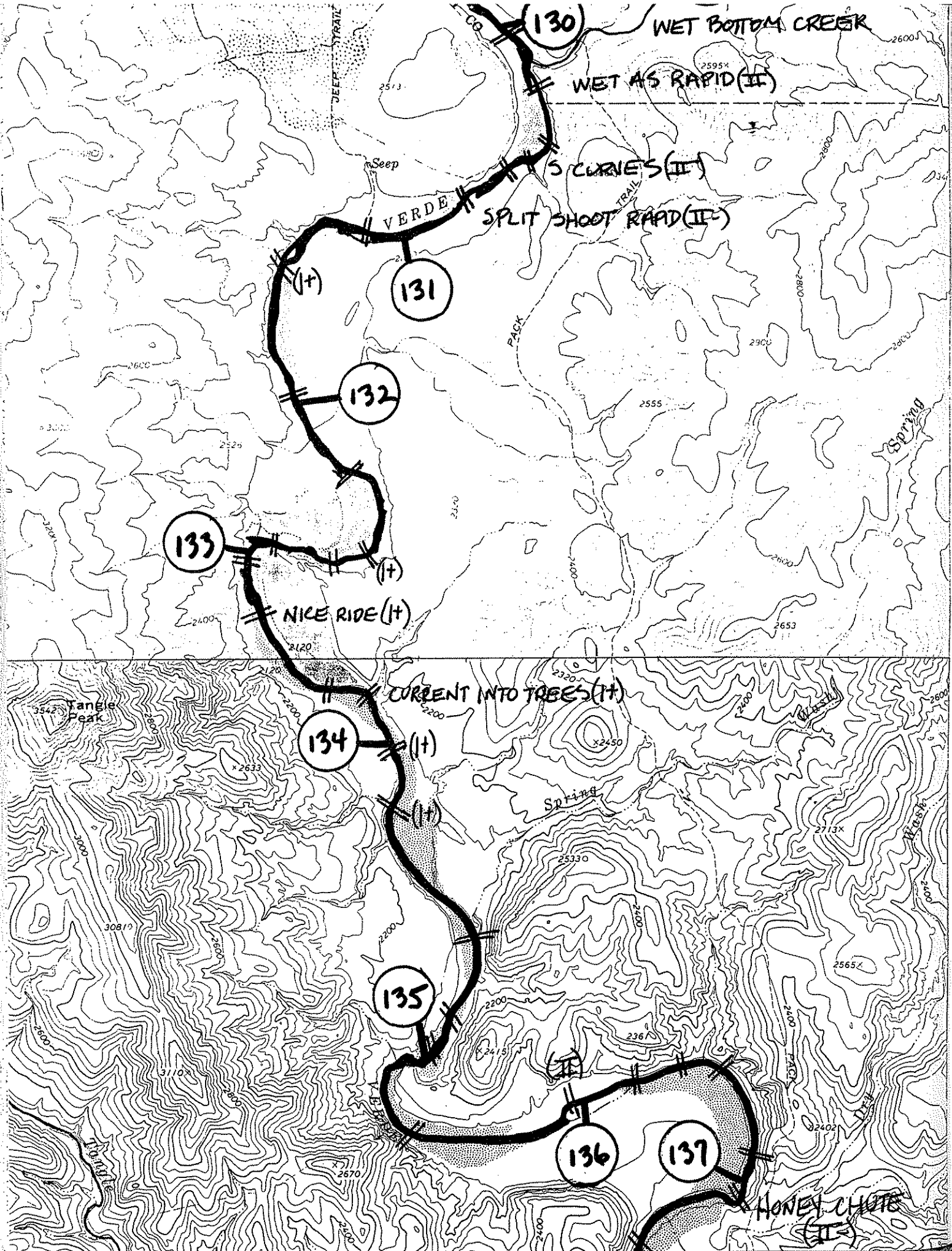
The puzzling high water currents continue their ways until M. 130.7. Here, the Verde lets loose its pent-up energy at Split Shoot. You can refer to the early part of this chapter for comparative photos of this drop.

Split Shoot comes immediately after the large rock in the center of the channel. It is a straightforward chute with some sizable waves. The smaller left channel merges at M. 130.8 and you settle into a quiet post-Wet As and S-Curve pool.

Mile 131.0 - Elevation 2,160 - Slower water continues until you see a low flow riffle at M. 131.1. Several more little drops are run during this mile with perhaps the most notable being at M. 131.5 and 131.9. During higher flows, use caution at M. 131.5 due to the cur-



~ Mile 130.5 - Squirrely S-Curves at 3,000 cfs ~



WET BOTTOM CREEK

WET AS RAPID (II)

SCURIES (II)

SPLIT SHOOT RAPID (II)

131

132

133

NICE RIDE (I)

134

CURRENT INTO TREES (I)

135

136

137

HONEY CHUTE (II)

DEEP TRAIL

PACK TRAIL

Tangle Peak

Spring



~ Mile 130.2 - Upper Portion of Wet As at about 3,000 cfs ~

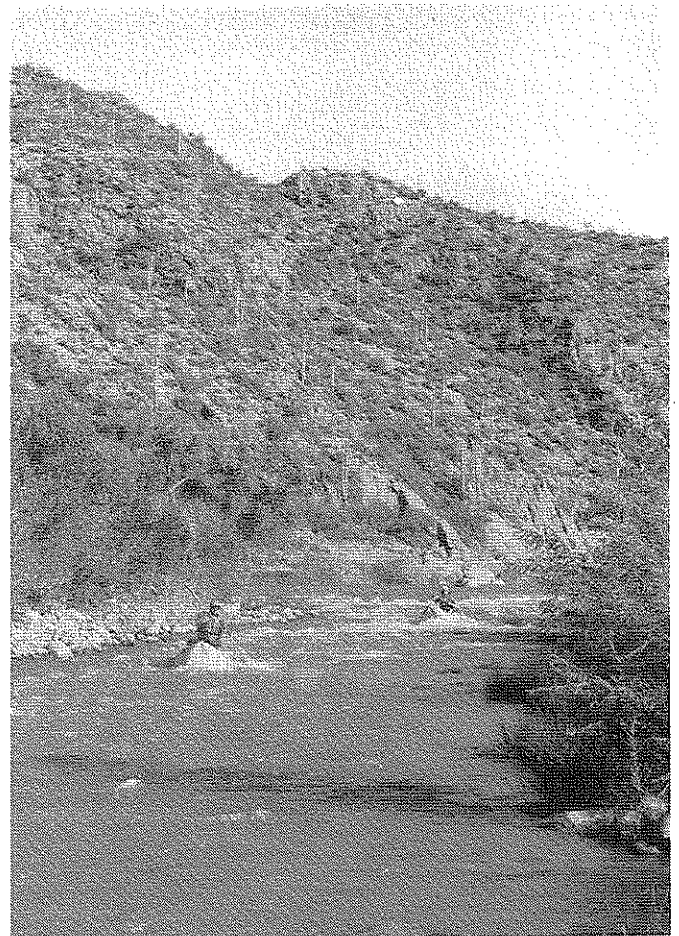
~ Notes ~

rent into the wall. Run well left.

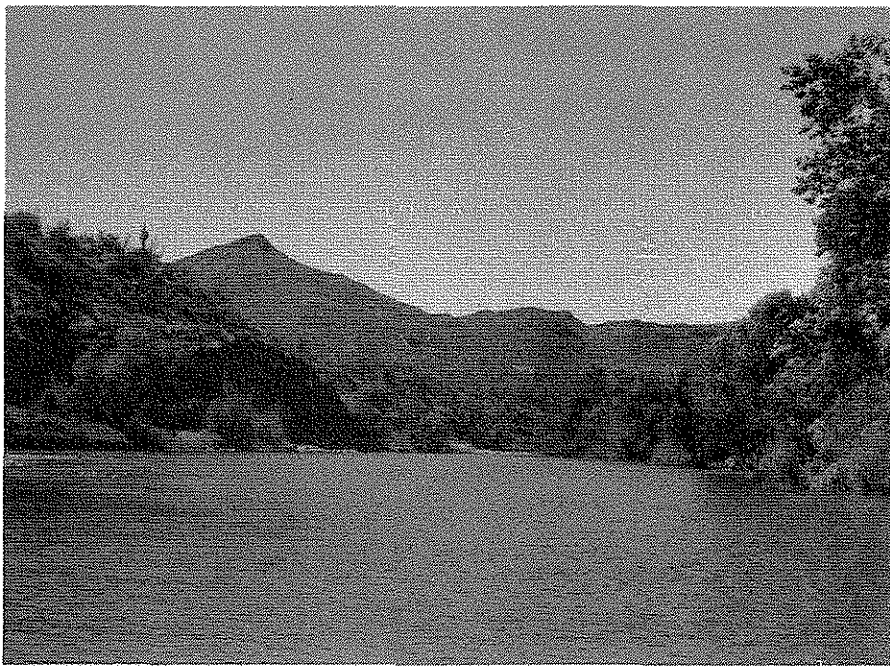
Mile 132.0 - Elevation 2,150 - More small riffles at Miles 132.3, 132.5, 132.6 and 132.8. Miles 132.3 and 132.6 may have some trees to watch for in pushy flows. Also, during high water, boaters may encounter more swirling currents at the base of the riffle where the River turns sharply right.

Mile 133.0 - Elevation 2,140 - At M. 133.2 you'll have a "Nice Ride" indeed when the flow is up. It is a narrow and wavy Class I+ ride. During lower flows, Nice Ride is fairly typical. Prior to M. 133.7 there may be two more tiny riffles. During elevated flows, you may

want to stop on the right to scout here. The current can take you into some trees just before the abrupt



~ Mile 133.2 - Boaters in Nice Ride at about 250 cfs ~



~ Upriver view of Tangle Peak - Mile 134.5 ~

right turn. Also, at the crook of the turn, you may find a flipper hole, undercut bank and powerful eddy.

Mile 134.0 - Elevation 2,120 - Tangle Peak towers prominently to the west. Just below M. 134.0, be watchful for trees on the left during low water in this small, yet deceptively dangerous chute. A similar situation may arise at M. 134.2 as well.

Mile 134.6 - Shaded by willows, Spring Wash enters on the left. It has created a narrow little riffle.

Mile 135.0 - Elevation 2,110 - Watch for strainers where the channels split during high water at M. 134.9. A fun little Class I drop awaits at M. 135.0. Before and after the small riffle at M. 135.4, you'll paddle leisurely in lovely pools.

Mile 136.0 - Elevation 2,100 - Watch out now! The long pool concludes and low water boaters may want to line or walk around the tree-choked middle part of this chute. High water does allow more room, but use the utmost caution nevertheless. The remainder of M. 136 is punctuated with several small rapids and picturesque views of the White Bluffs.

Mile 137.0 - Elevation 2,080 - At this spot, the river makes a sharp turn to the right and you drop into the Class II- Honey Chute. From medium to low flows, there are some exposed rocks to watch for and a cou-

ple of holes that are large enough to bury your bow. Honey Chute is a complete wash during higher flows.

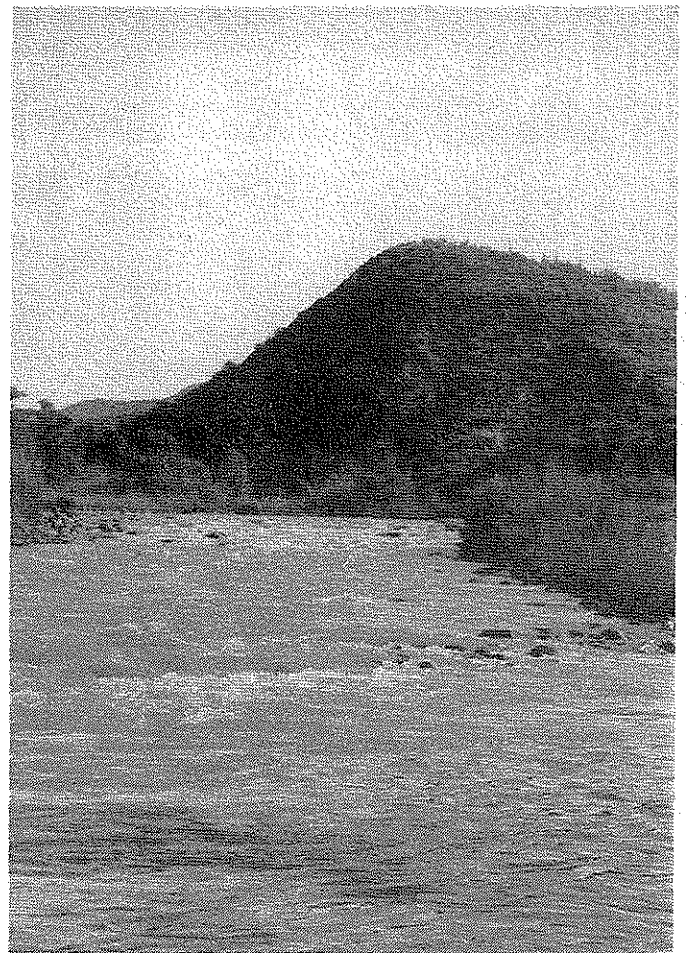
Mile 137.3 - Dry Wash enters through the flats on the left.

Mile 137.5 - Small rapid.

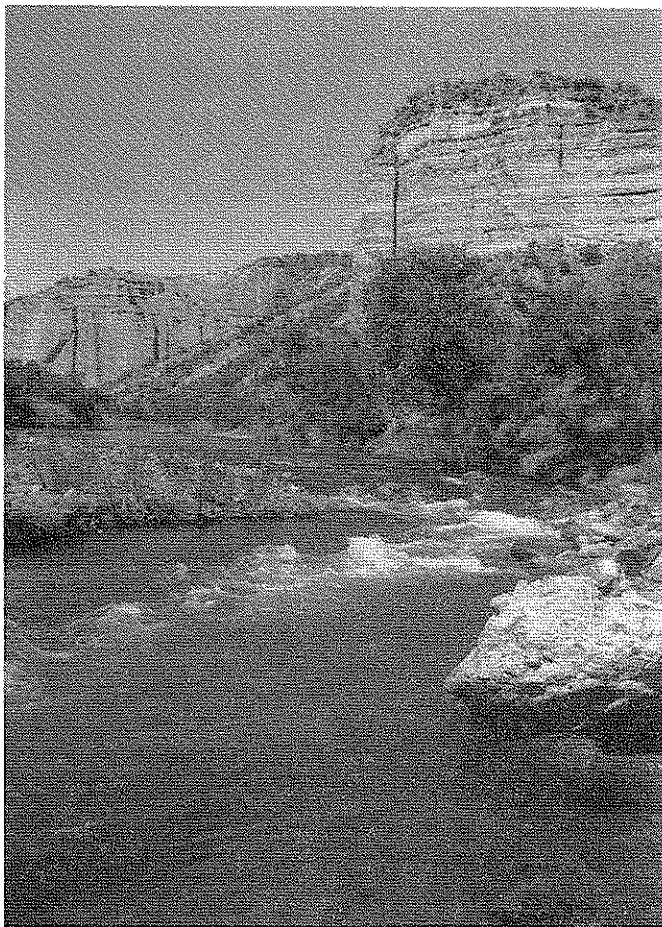
Mile 137.6 and Mile 137.9 - Watch for trees in these narrow chutes.

Mile 138.0 - Elevation 2,070 - If daylight is fading, you may want to look for a camp spot around here because the noise and nonsense of the Sheep Bridge area is under a mile away. During my first run down here, I miscalculated and was left with no choice but to camp just below Sheep Chute at

M. 139.5. I shared the evening air with loud rock and raucous behavior until well past midnight.



~Mile 135.0 - 300 cfs ~



~ Mile 137.0 - Honey Chute at 200 cfs ~

Mile 138.3 - Typically slow water with the exception of a small rapid at M. 138.3.

Mile 138.5 - Splendid Tangle Creek joins the Verde. Have you ever seen more Saguaros in one place than upon that nob hill near the creek's mouth? Tangle Creek is well worth a hike.

The Class I+/II- Tangle Creek Rapids start just below here, and can run for a solid quarter mile during hefty flows. It can be a fun and wavy finale. Lower flows provide boaters with several small rapids at M. 138.5 and 138.7. During all low or high water runs, floaters should be cautious of the final Tangle rapid at M. 138.8. You'll enter into a fairly typical little drop, but by midway down you'll notice how the current will tend to push you to the left towards the trees. The lower the cfs, the more reason for heightened awareness at this spot.

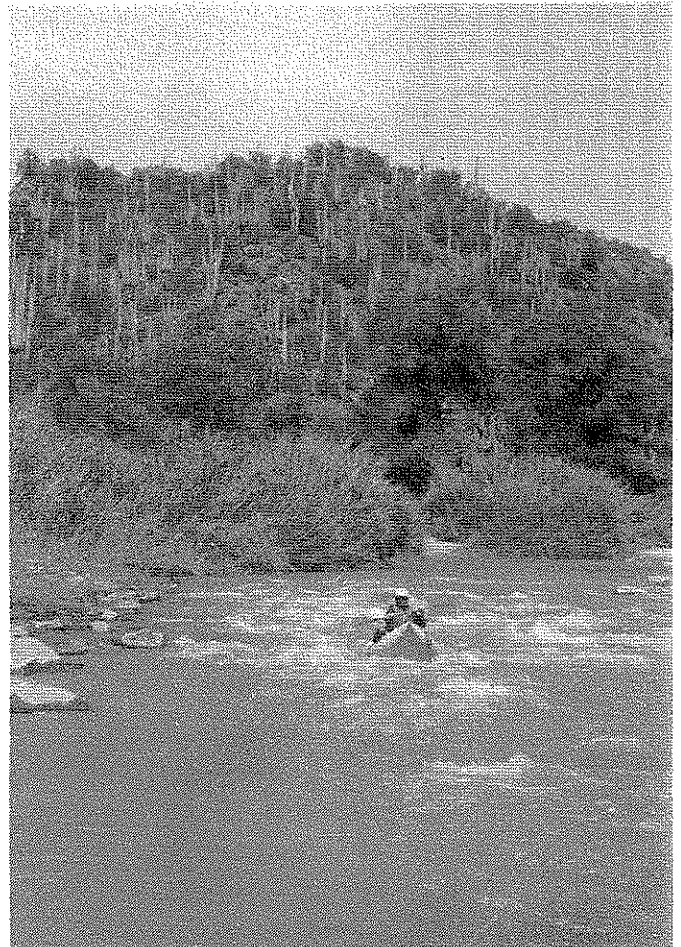
Mile 139.0 - Elevation 2,060 - You'll run a small rapid just prior to M. 139 and then settle into the Sheep

Bridge pool. Sycamore and Horse Creeks converge on the left.

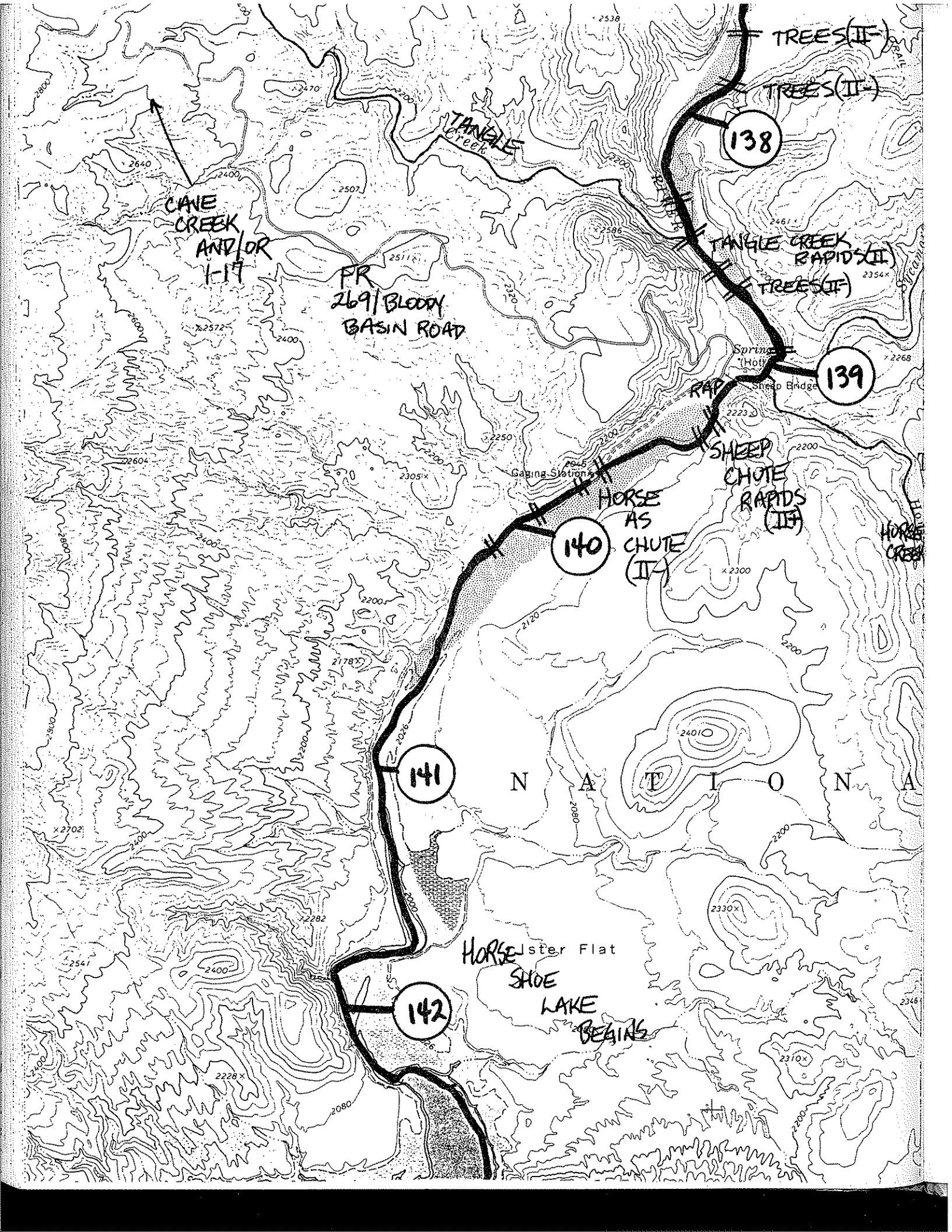
For nearly forty years, Sheep Bridge was used to cross flocks of sheep from winter to summer pastures. And, during the lambing and shearing seasons, sheep were funneled to the west side where shearing sheds and bunkhouses once stood. The Bridge was erected in 1943, and the last flocks crossed it in 1979. The Bridge you see today is not the original. Deemed hazardous to hikers and horsemen, the old Bridge was demolished in 1988. Because of its historical significance, the new bridge was built in 1989.

In the reeds on the right before you go under the bridge, you'll find the popular Sheep Bridge hot springs. Despite its heavy use, the springs' rapid rate of recharge helps keep the tubs pretty clean.

The Sheep Bridge RAP is just down stream of the bridge on the right.



~ Mile 138.5 - Upper Tangle Creek Rapid
- 300 cfs ~



CANE CREEK AND/OR I-17

FR 269/BLOODY BASIN ROAD

TANGLE Creek

TREES (II-)

TREES (II-)

TANGLE CREEK RAPIDS (II)

TREES (II-)

Spring (Holt)

Sheep Bridge

SHEEP CHUTE RAPIDS (II)

RAP

HORSE AS CHUTE (II)

Gaging Station

NATIONAL

HORSE SHOE LAKE BEGINS

2401

2330x

2640

2400

2470

2507

2511

2538

2586

2461

2354x

2268

2572

2400

2260

2250

2305x

2302

2223

2200

2300

2200

2200

2120

2178x

2026

2080

2200

2702x

2400

2282

2541

2400

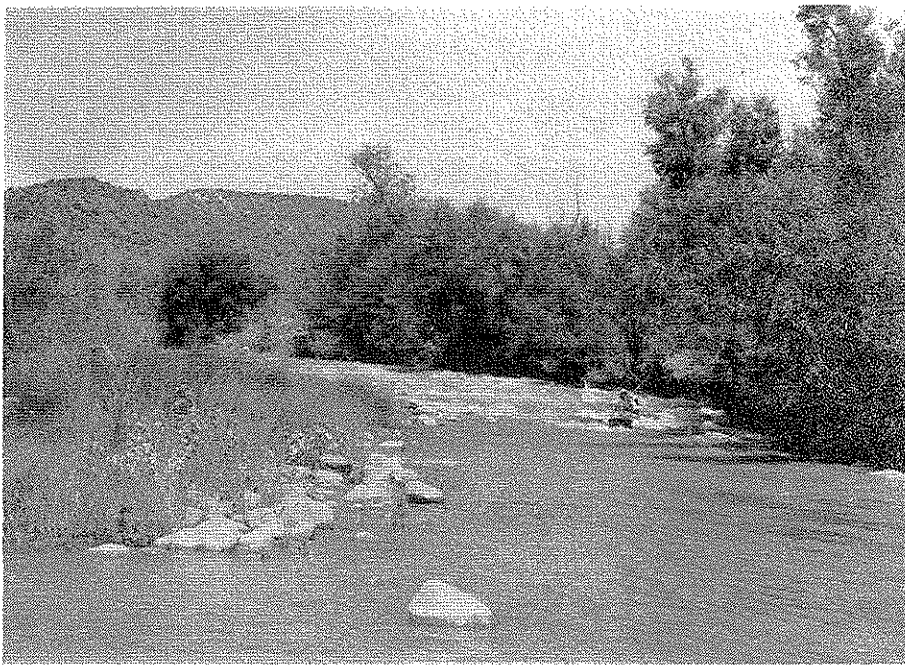
2080

2346

2228x

2080

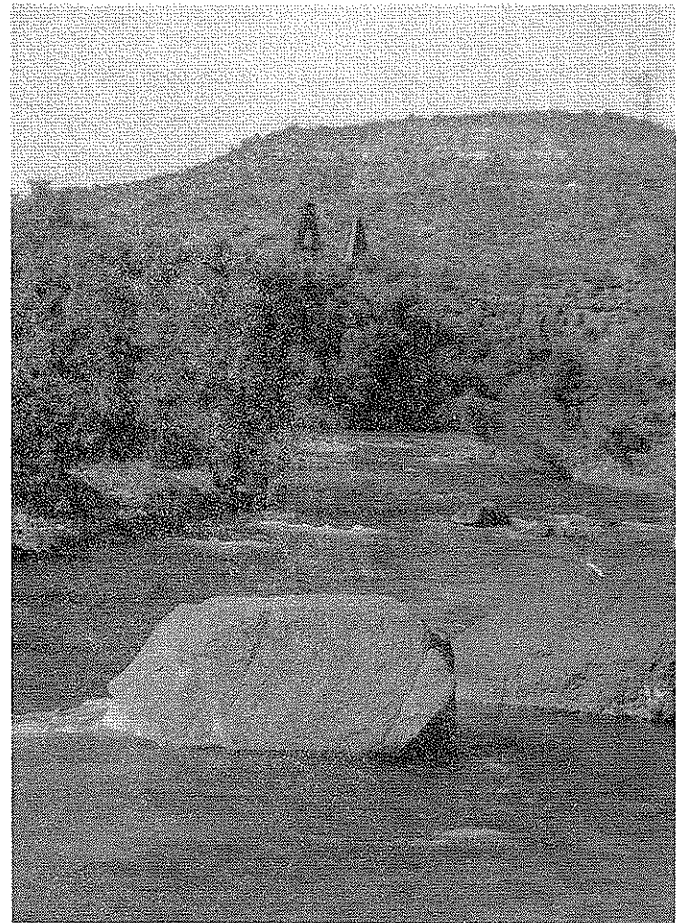
2200



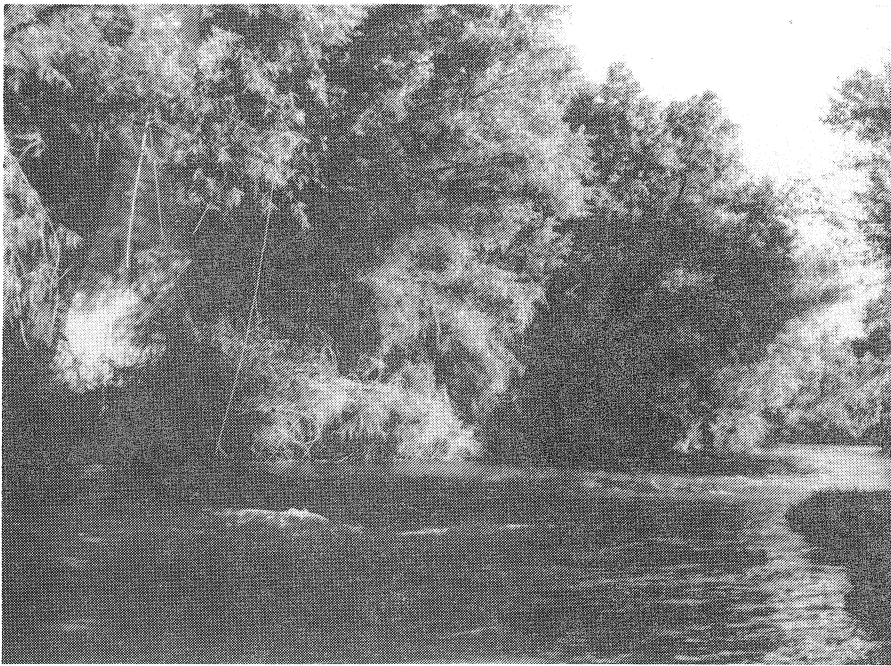
~ Mile 138.8 - Current into trees - 300 cfs ~

~ Notes ~

In the pool below Sheep Chute, you may want to be on the lookout for river otter. These most magnificent of river creatures are hopefully making a lasting



~ Sheep Chute - Mile 139.3 - 200 cfs ~



Mile 139.7 - Upper Horse As Chute and Gauge - 200 cfs ~

comeback up and down the Verde. During a September 1988 trip, a couple of otter treated me to a wonderful and memorable display of playfulness and showmanship.

Mile 139.6 - The pool ends and you should paddle far right. Be careful of trees and debris in this narrow top portion. Once you are into the clear channel, you'll be treated to a swift and almost tunnel-like float through the lush growth.

Mile 139.7 - In medium to high water, you are in for a speedy and wavy ride when you pass the gauge at M. 139.7. It is difficult to scout Horse As Chute (one "s", again, although I'm "dam" tempted to spell it otherwise!), so look well ahead for any strainers or lodged debris. The last of the high water ride ends, really ends around M. 140.2. Great fun in here!

In lower flows, all of Horse As Chute is simply dotted with comfortable and typical small riffles.

Mile 140.0 - Elevation 2,040.

Mile 140.2 - When the lake is full, the Verde will die near here. In lower lake levels, you may have some minimal current for a short while longer.

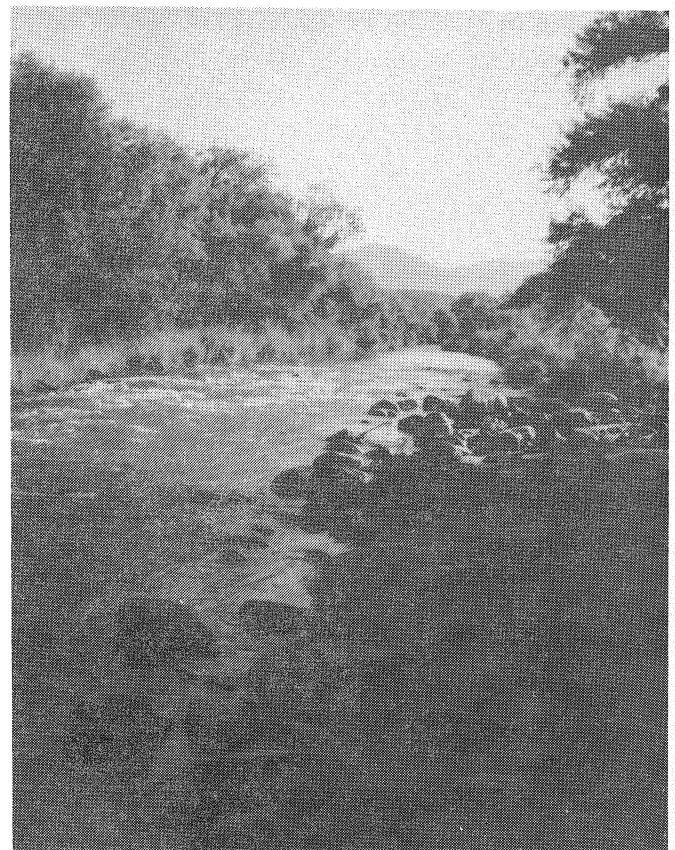
Mile 141.0 - Elevation 2,020 - From here to the dam, the river miles and elevations are based on the ances-

tral, predammed channel of the Verde. The present spillway elevation of Horseshoe is 1,999 feet above sea level.

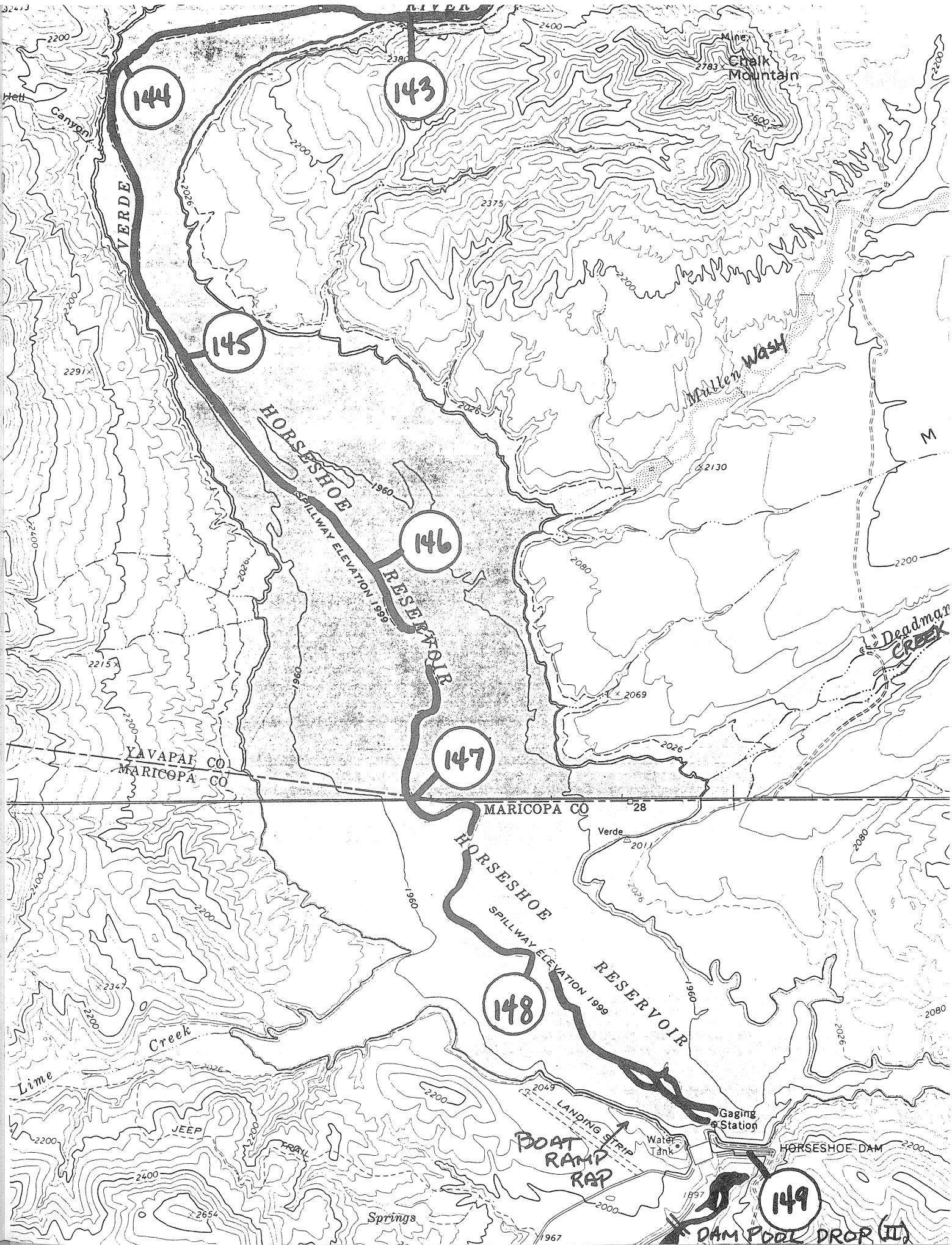
Between M. 141.0 and the elbow at Ister Flat, you're likely to see flotsam and logjams that testify to the fact that the natural processes of moving water have been terminated. It can take some extra time and effort to get through the mess.

Mile 142.0 - Elevation 2,000 - You may begin to see the first anglers and motorboats. With still winds, you've got about a two-hour paddle before your take-out.

Mile 143.0 - Elevation 1,990 - Prior to 1992, Bald Eagles were nesting upon the cliffs on the left, and they were spotted regularly in this vicinity. I've heard that one may have been killed by some criminal in 1992, therefore further jeopardizing the comeback trail of the eagles in these parts.



~ Mile 140.0 - Horse As in low water ~



Mile 144.0 - Elevation 1,980 - Hell Canyon enters on the right.

Mile 145.0 to Mile 148.0 - Elevations drop from 1,960 to 1,930. Coincidentally, these river bed elevations exactly match the heyday (may-day!) decades of dam building in Arizona. With the exception of Roosevelt and Granite Reef (1910's), nearly a score of major dams were erected during this time on the Colorado, Gila, Salt and Verde – not to mention scads of other plugs on virtually every smaller creek or stream throughout Arizona.



The 60's and Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado were the wake up call. Perhaps the most controversial dam in the world marks the bittersweet moment where we began having a strong enough people's voice to battle those who, for so long, thought that damming, divert-

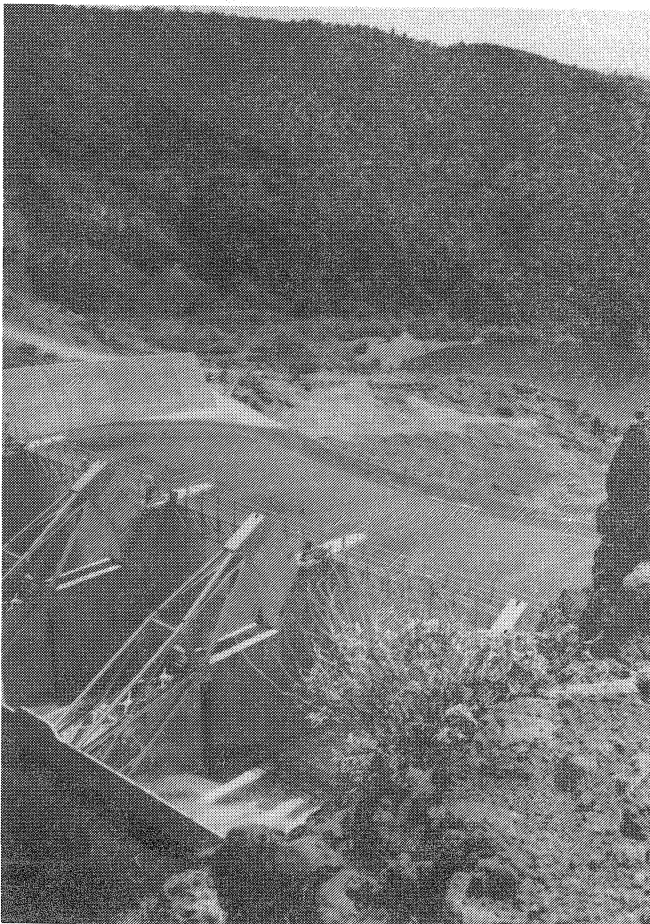
~ Horseshoe Lake at 1% capacity - For a while, the River got to behave like a river again! Carving and braiding and seeking its rightful place . . . ~

ing and canalizing were the only means for water resource management. As mentioned in the following chapters, even the Bureau of Reclamation ("Wreck-the-Nation" - credit to Katie Lee) has changed its tune and mission!

Mile 148.5 - Take-out RAP, boat ramp and parking area.

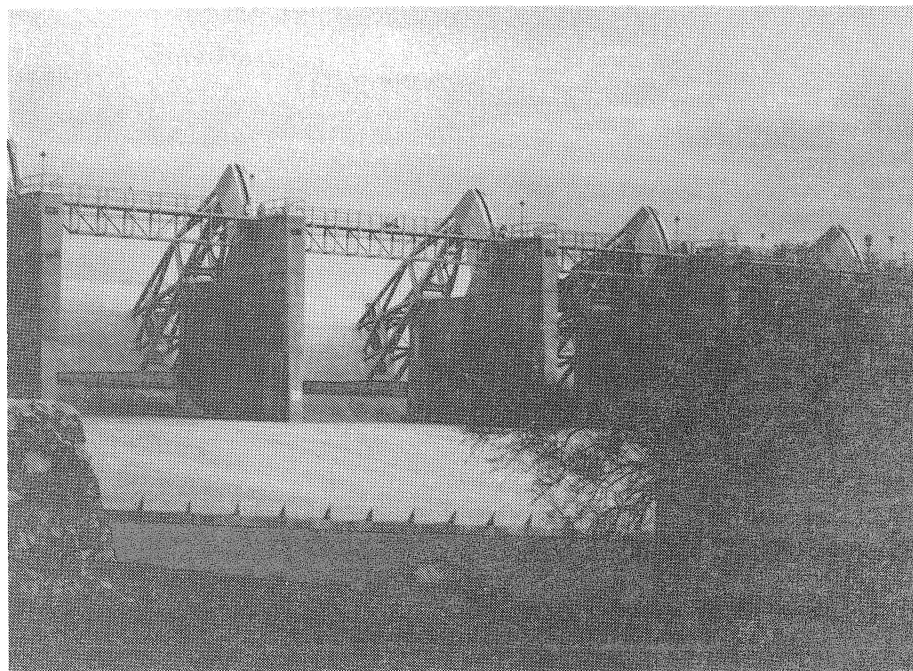
Mile 149.0 - Horseshoe Dam. There is no river access near the dam.

In Conclusion: I'll yield to the authors of *The Angry West* for a wrapup and de-rig for this chapter – "In the Mazatzal Mountains the Verde runs fast and murky through the late Arizona spring In the Wilderness . . . saguaros and palo verde still flank trails to nowhere. In the Mazatzal the sound of birds and the smell of wildflowers still float on spring wind, and the sun brings out lupine and poppy and brittle bush in smashing bursts of color. In a land carved out of the sides of hell a man can build a fire on a cold spring night and watch the sun go down. And know he is alive." (Lamm and McCarthy, *The Angry West*, 1982.)



~ Mile 149.0 - Horseshoe Plug ~

HORSESHOE DAM (M. 149) TO BARTLETT LAKE (M. 169)



~ Horseshoe Dam ~

- Total River Miles - 20 miles
- Elevation Drop - 1,920 to 1,620
- Average Drop - 15 feet per mile. Of course, much of this "drop" is below Bartlett.
- Class - Class I and II. See the Cautions section.
- Topo Maps - Horseshoe Dam, Lion Mtn., Maverick Mtn., and Bartlett Dam
- Shuttle Time - 2 hours
- Days Needed - 1 to 2 days

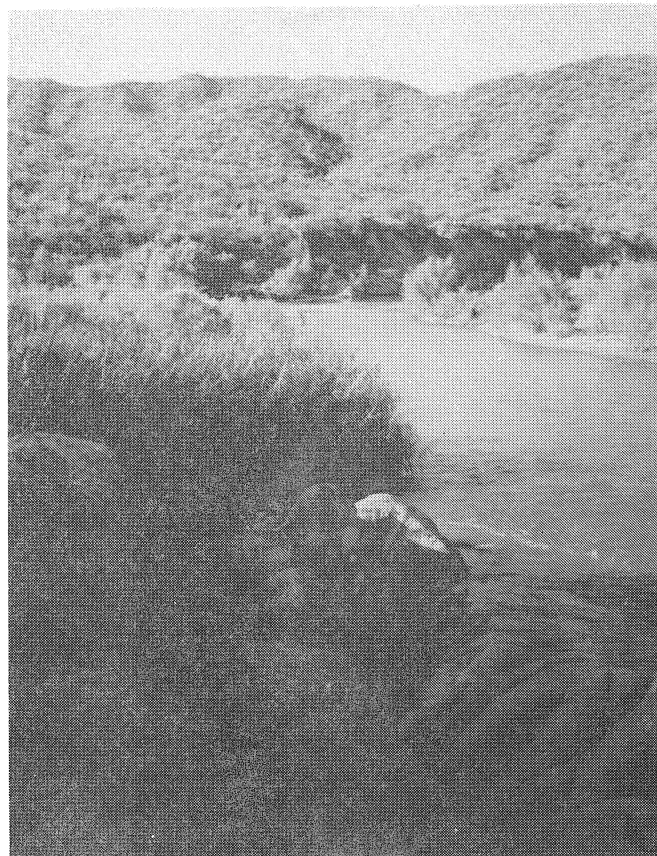
RIVER ACCESS POINTS

~ RAPS ~

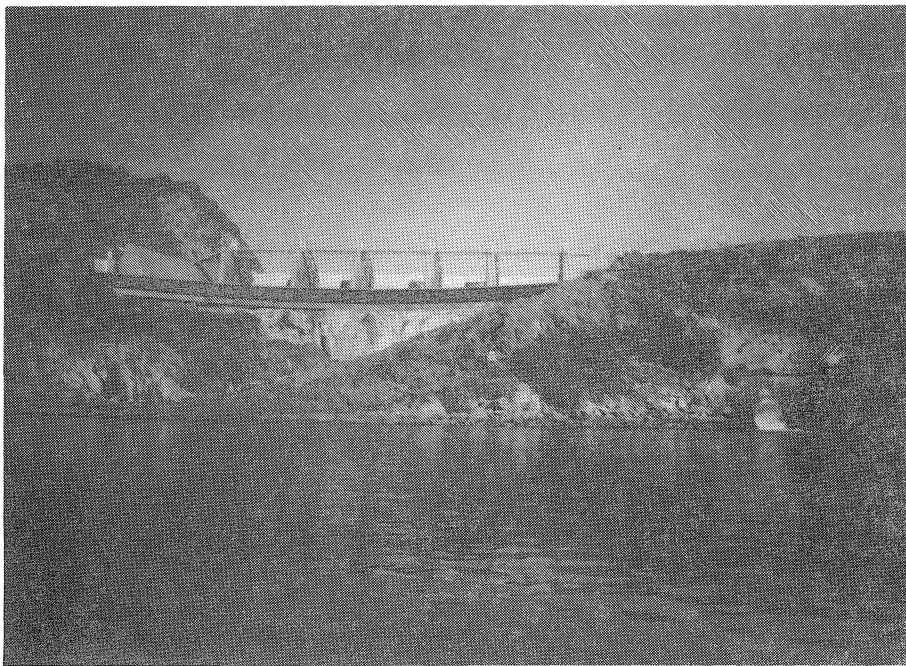
Horseshoe Dam (M. 149) - From the town of Cave Creek, take Cave Creek Road (FR 205) east for seven miles until you see the signs for the lakes. Hang right and proceed for six miles to the Horseshoe turnoff. Now you are in for 10+ miles of washboard. Be watchful for boat trailers and speeders fishtailing on the slopes and turns.

A mile or so past Mesquite Recreation Area, you'll see FR 205A and access to Horseshoe Recreation Area. Follow 205A for a mile and you'll be at the base of Horseshoe Dam.

Horseshoe and Mesquite Recreation Areas (M. 150 - 151) - These two riverside areas offer easy access and ample camping spots. Port-A-Johns are the only "facilities." Bring your own firewood. Too many trees have been tortured already.



~ Devil's Hole RAP - Mile 156.4 ~



~ Mile 149 - Horseshoe Dam ~

KA Ranch Ford (M. 151.8) - This is the low water access into the privately owned KA Ranch. During heavy dam releases, this is the most commonly used RAP for floaters. Putting in here allows you to skip the potentially dangerous first part of this run. Refer to the Cautions section.

Numerous dirt spurs off of the Horseshoe Road are easy to see around M. 152.

Mile 153.8 - FR 161 and 42 provide four-wheel access to this region around the gauging station. This access is into the eagle closure area, so don't count on driving in here from December to June. This spot may be used as a pullout for tubers and duckies, but rarely by serious floaters.

Devil's Hole (M. 156.4) - The name, "Devil's Hole," appears only on forest maps. The RAP is easily spotted from the river. Due to its heavily impacted status, overnights are advised to skip it.

The Devil's Hole Road is accessed off the Bartlett Road about three miles down from the Horseshoe turnoff. Word has it that it is a four-wheel only, six-mile drive to the river.

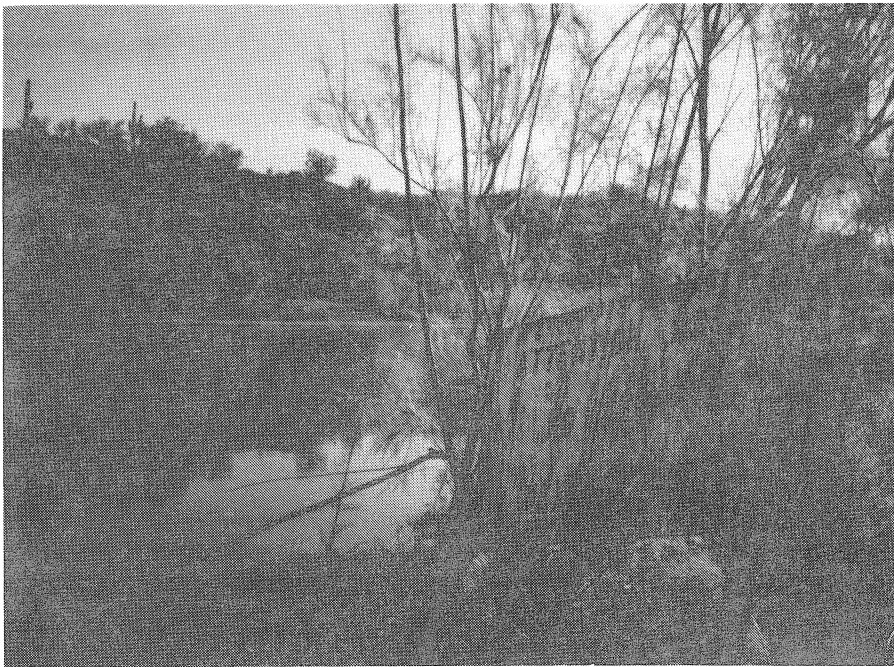
Bartlett Flats, S B Cove and Rattlesnake (M. 163 to 165) - If you do not wish to paddle to the main Jojoba boat ramp, you can easily pull out at any one of these three "upstream" areas. They are accessible by most sorts of vehicles, as attested to by the crowds you are likely to see.

From the main Bartlett road, it is 3.5 miles up to Bartlett Flats, 2.5 miles to S B Cove and less than 1 mile to Rattlesnake.

Jojoba (Main Bartlett Boat ramp) - (M. 167) - This is the final takeout spot for this river stretch. You may wish to paddle down a mile or so to glimpse the dam, but there is no public access there.



~ Horseshoe Lake - 40% Full ~



~ Mile 153.2 ~

~ Notes ~

No gas or supplies are currently available at Bartlett, so stock up in Carefree or Cave Creek before you start your trip.

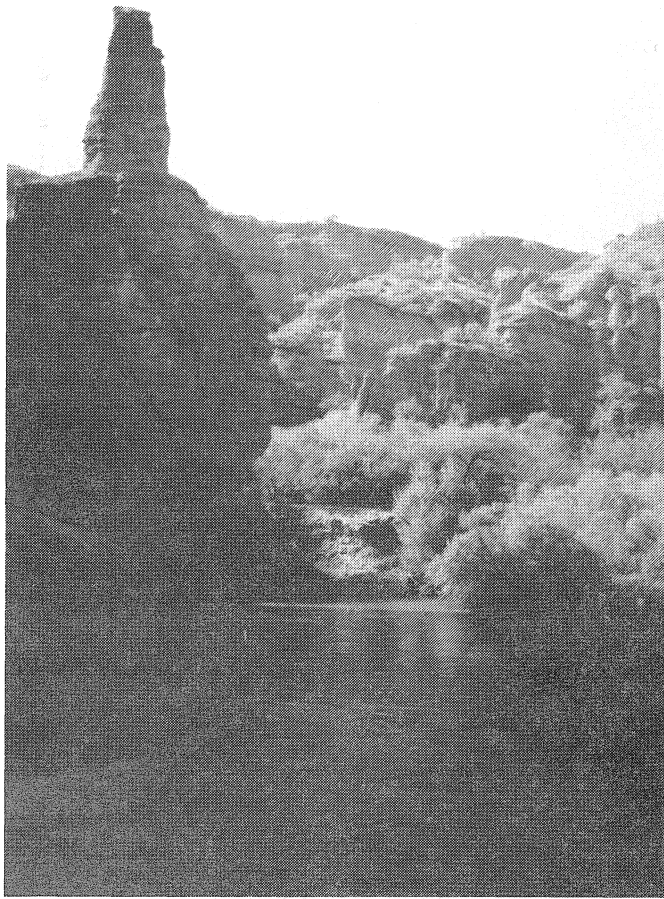
GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS, HIGHLIGHTS AND CAUTIONS

The story of Horseshoe Dam is a classic story of water “trade off” and “compromise” – two concepts so common in the history of Arizona’s water resource management. The story begins in the 1940’s. World War II brought about a dire need for increased copper supplies. Phelps Dodge Corporation, a giant in copper mining then and to this day, was in the call to up its production by virtually any means possible. Increasing their output of copper required securing additional sources of water. So, a complicated agreement was expeditiously struck between Phelps Dodge/Morenci Mine and the Salt River Project. Phelps Dodge was allowed to divert water from the nearby Black River. The Black is a major tributary of the Salt and therefore a large contributor to SRP’s customers. In return, Phelps Dodge had to construct a dam on SRP’s other major source of river water – the Verde. That dam, completed in 1947, is Horseshoe.

Standing to this day, Horseshoe Dam holds in its bowels, bowels equally owned by SRP and Phelps Dodge, a history and statement of the complicated “rights” and wrongs of Verde River resource management.

A bit of Bartlett Dam history will be covered in the next chapter.

In the 1980’s, the Verde damn near suffered more “water storage projects.” One of those was to be on this stretch and the other 40 miles down near the Salt/Verde confluence. In the vicinity of mile 154, a



~ Mile 154.2 ~

dam called Cliff was proposed as a component of the notorious and controversial "Plan 6." Space won't permit a detailed account of the plot and characters of "Plan 6." Suffice to say that all of the heavy hitters from every quarter of federal, state, municipal, tribal, intergovernmental, private, public, corporate, environmental, etc., interests embroiled themselves in a perplexing fray over Colorado, Agua Fria, Gila, Salt and Verde waters. The fray continues to this day.

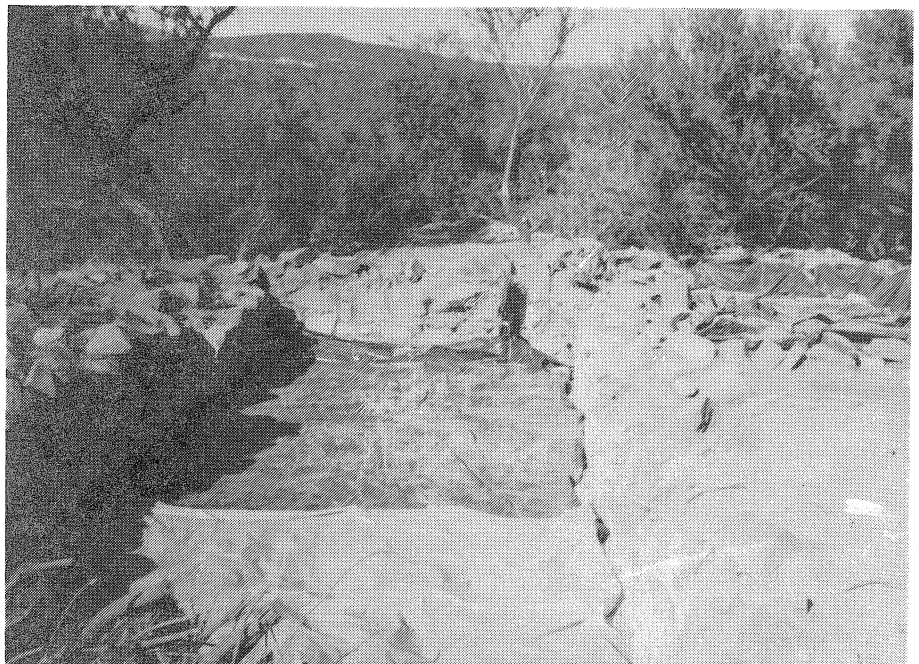
Portions of "Plan 6," such as Central Arizona Project Colorado River agreements, and enlarged and/or reconstructed dam sites on the Agua Fria and Salt have happened. But Cliff on the Verde has been shelved. As each year passes, it gathers more appreciative dust.

Contributing mightily to the demise of Cliff was nature's own heavy hitter, the endangered bald eagle.

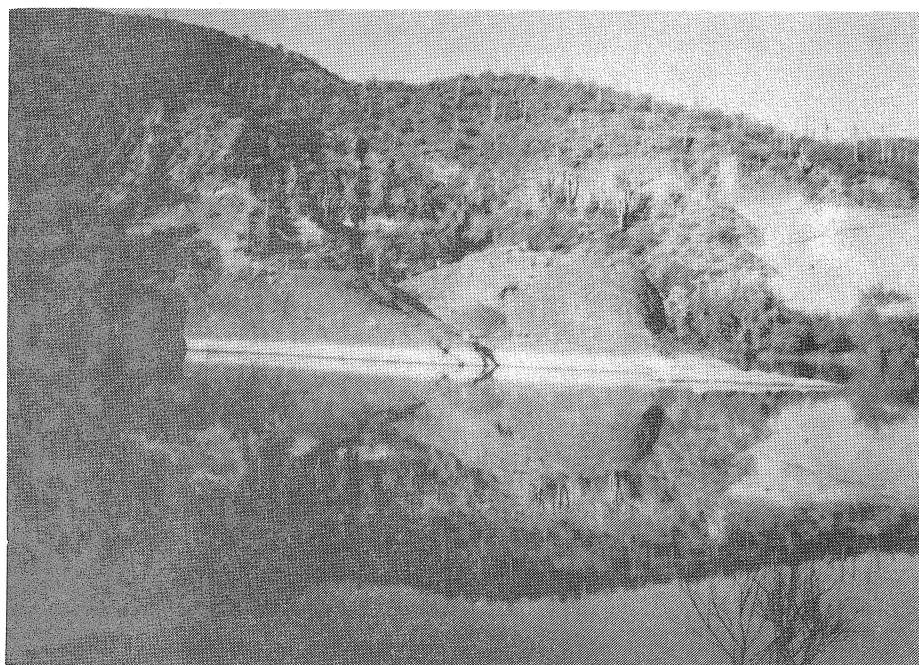
A sign at M. 153.2 announces your entry into this prime eagle nesting habitat. It is a splendid area relatively free from the heavy impact so obvious above and below. In fact, the miles between 153 and 158 are not unlike portions of the Wild and Scenic Verde. Critics of public policies that protect our dwindling natural riparian regions should float through here and imagine the scene had it been inundated by Cliff.

As with everywhere in the entire Verde watershed, Indian ruins and relics, above reservoir waterlines, can be found. Happening upon a site of untouched ancient history is a rare thrill these days, but it can happen even throughout this widely traveled region. All finds must be left exactly as they lie.

In 1992, a major dig began just off the road between Horseshoe and Mesquite Recreation areas. You can't miss it. It will be intriguing to watch the progress of this excavation as it will no doubt shed more light on the rich history of settlements along the lower Verde.



~ Excavation Begins in 1992 ~



~ Mile 157.4 - Bartlett at 90% ~

~ Notes ~



~ Mile 149.4 - 400 cfs ~

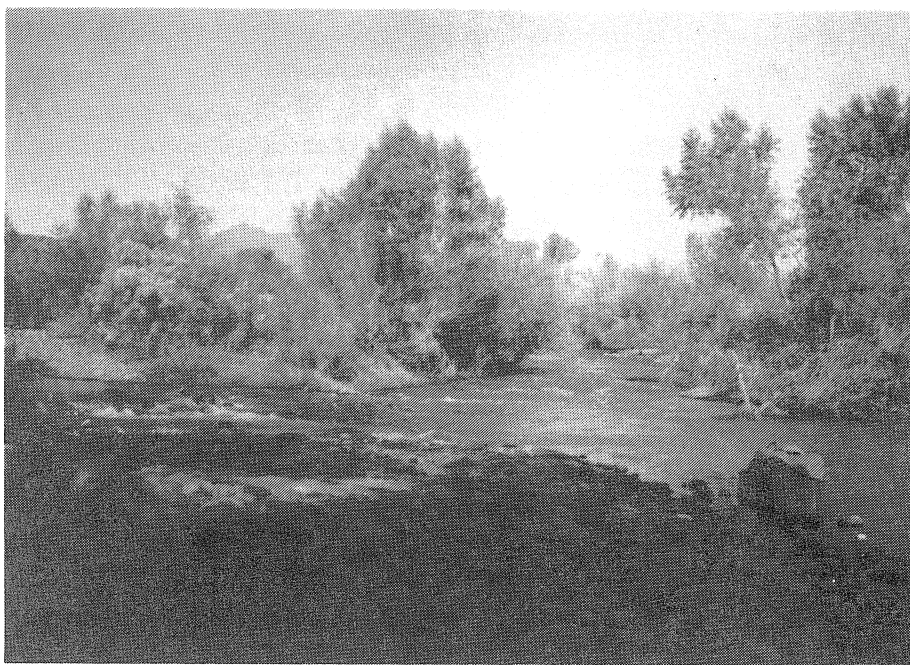
This run could be called the "Dam Run" of the Verde. Pinched between Horseshoe and Bartlett, the Verde's flow is entirely dependent upon SRP releases from above and the lake level below. If Bartlett is at or near capacity, the Verde turns to lake just seven miles down from Horseshoe Dam. When Bartlett is down, you may have a dozen or so miles of flow.

A call to the SRP flow line and live discussions with SRP hydrologists are mandatory precautions during your trip planning. Releases from Horseshoe have ranged from an unfloatable nil to tens of thousands of cfs. Talk to them and try to pin them down on projected releases for your days on the river.

During wholesale releases from the dam, the upper part of this run should be considered hazardous and off limits to all except highly experienced desert river boatmen.

The decades of absence of nature's scouring floods have left this dam-controlled stretch a sadly confused affair. Riverside growth has flourished and crept into the braided channels just waiting to seriously snag boats and boaters. Be extremely cautious during all flows. Most mishaps happen between the dam and Mile 152, so putting on at the KA RAP is your safest choice.

During normal releases, this run has several Class I and perhaps some Class II rapids at miles 149.3, 153.1 and 155.4. The elevation drop is significant enough to give you a nice swift ride for most of the first third of this run. Again, it is the dastardly



~ Mile 150.9 - 400 cfs ~

strainers that provide the challenge. Because of them, the Class II rating for the whole of this run is very well-deserved.

The Verde's channels are constantly changing and presenting boaters with new obstacles and challenges. Trust your eyes and ears and be careful.

All in all, this pinch of the dams run is well worth your time. Late fall and winter floats are especially rewarding; fewer people congregate, the weather is cool and the beautiful wildlife and scenery seem at greater peace with the river.

RIVER MILE LOG

Mile 149.3 - Elevation 1,920 - Horseshoe Dam RAP and pool.

Mile 149.3 - The pool ends at mile 149.3 with a potential Class II rapid. It definitely has enough rocks and current into trees to dump you just as you've started out. Depending upon the flow, it would be wise to

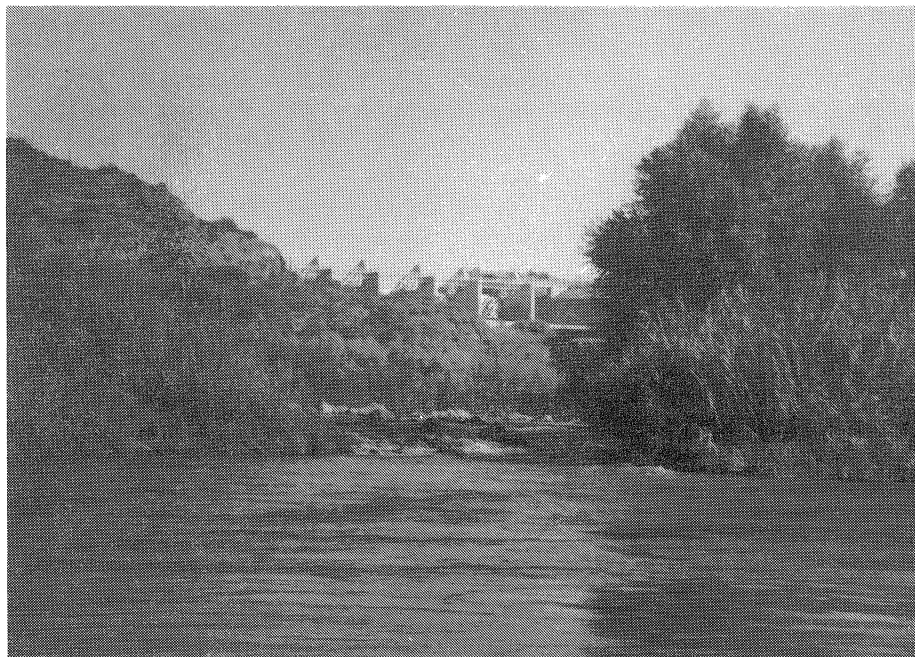
scout it for danger points.

Mile 149.4 - After "Dam Pool Drop," you'll run a lengthy low level rapid with some swivel to it.

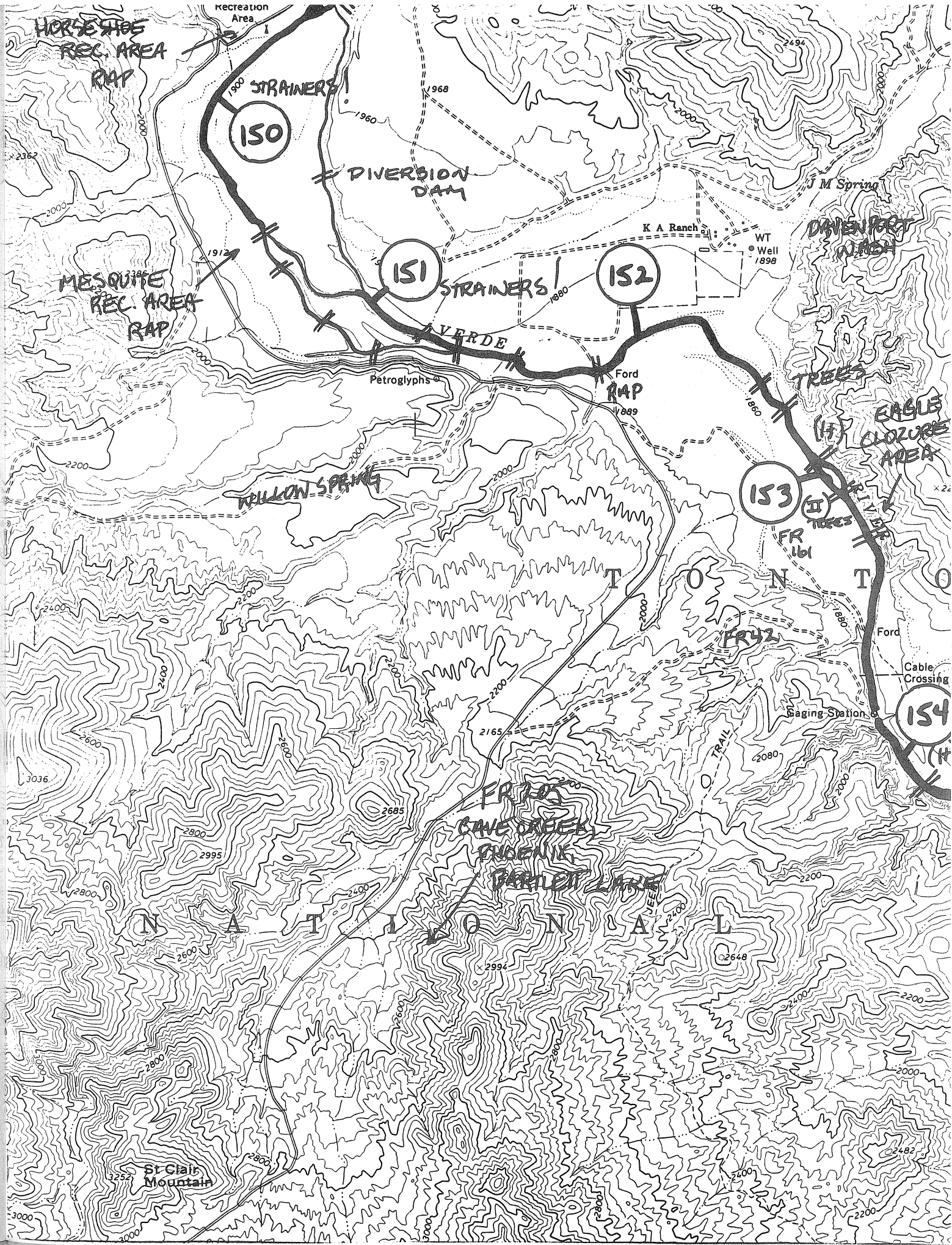
Mile 149.7 - Horseshoe Recreation Area. When upon the main channel, you'll likely not see this RAP. It is bordered by a small and slack braid heavily used by anglers.

Mile 150.0 - Elevation 1,900 - The Verde pools up to M. 150.5. Here you may see what appears like a river-wide levee. Now the Verde splits and braids into a myriad of rivulets. I've found the best luck by cutting right at the earliest offering.

This is a region that is notorious for strainers, so look well ahead and keep to the inside of any blind turn. A broadside into a strainer even at slow flow can cause an irretrievable pin! The right channel contains several small riffles during its passage by the Mesquite RAP at mile 150.6. The left channels, I've found, contain more strainers and debris. You're also farther from help if the need should arise. Again, because of the unpredictable nature of miles 150 to 152, you should consider putting on at KA RAP.



~ Mile 149.3 - Dam Pool Drop ~



HORSESHOE
REC. AREA
RAP

ISO

DIVERSION
DAM

ISI

IS2

MESQUITE
REC. AREA
RAP

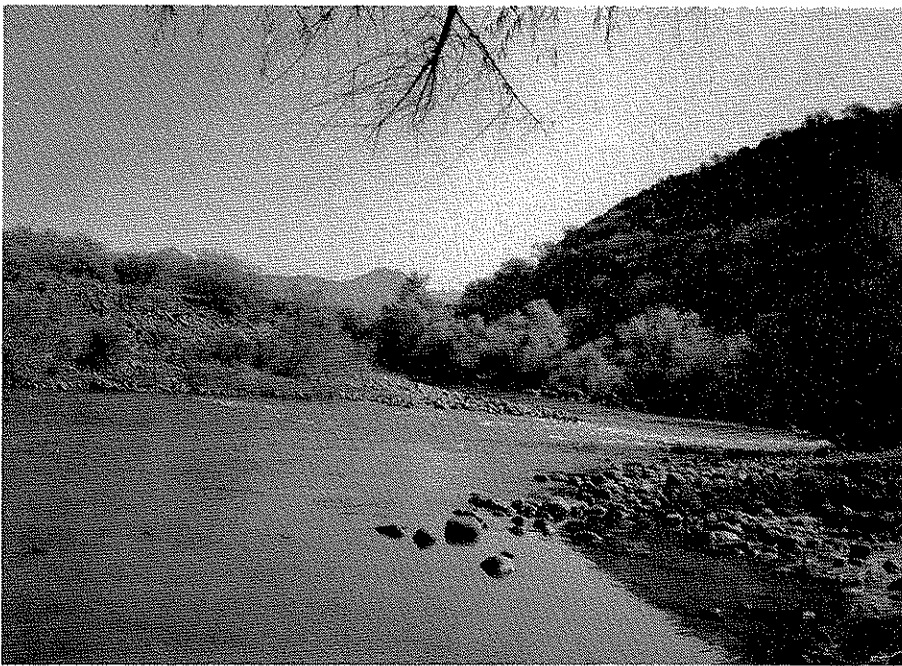
IS3

IS4

St. Clair
Mountain

PRADO
CANYON
PHOENIX
PARALLEL





~ Mile 151.0 ~

Mile 151.0 - Elevation 1,880 - A little riffle and a left turn where the Verde comes closest to the Horseshoe Road.

Mile 151.3 - The channels merge with a characteristic rif.

Mile 151.5 - Your topos won't show it, but again the river splits and braids into who knows how many portions. I've gone right and had some squirrely going in the windy, enshrouded channel. I've gone left and center and had some clear going, and then again, some drags, too. Take your pick, and be alert for obstacles.

The whole puzzle doesn't become complete again until near mile 152.6.

Mile 151.8 - KA Ranch property, low water ford and heavily impacted RAP. From here to upper Bartlett, you'll be less likely to encounter others. Watch for trees in the turn just downriver from the ford.

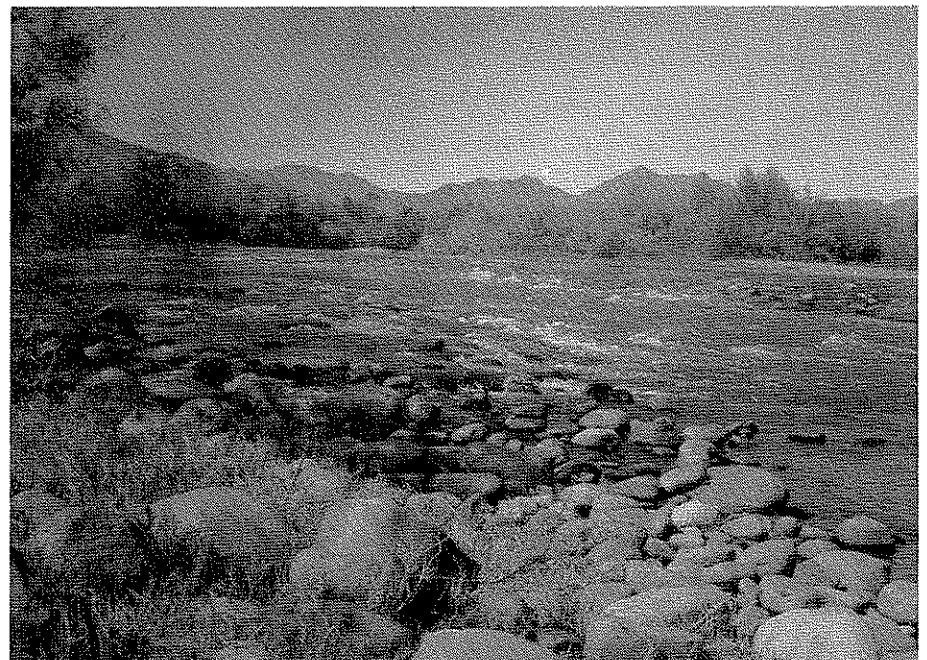
Mile 152.0 - Elevation 1,860.

Mile 152.6 - The channels merge and you run a swift narrow rapid with trees and debris on the left. Use caution. The expansive Davenport Wash arrives on the left.

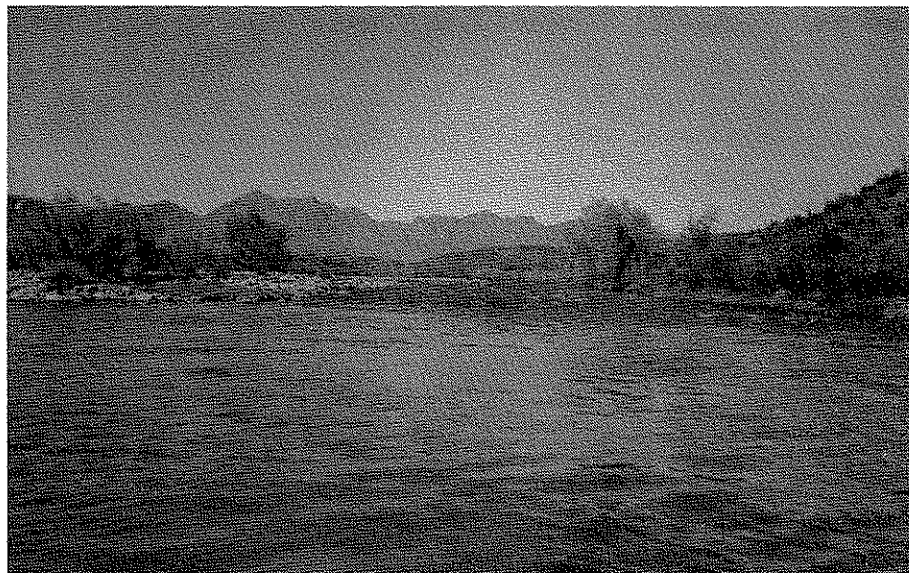
Mile 152.9 - A 1+ drop with some push and waves.

Mile 153.1 - Elevation 1,840 - Here is another narrow chute with a severe strainer or two. In lower water, you may want to line this one. After this mess, the river turns right at the wall and settles into a lovely pool.

Mile 153.2 - I hope the sign is still there on your right! The last I saw of it, it was toppled and badly weathered. Hopefully, the Tonto National Forest will soon fix the sign, so all can be duly warned that they are entering protected habitat for the endangered eagles. There is no stopping for the next two miles from December to June. Disembarking to explore is mighty tempting in this splendid area. It is one of the highlights of this run.



~ Mile 152.6 - All Channels Merge Again - 400 cfs ~



~ Mile 153.0 - Looking Northwest - 400 cfs ~

Mile 153.3 - Small rif.

Mile 153.6 - FR 42 and 161 touch the river. The ford is obvious, but I've not seen evidence of the cable crossing.

Mile 153.9 - Gauging station.

Mile 154.0 - Elevation 1,820 - Floaters are in for a treat here. The Verde flows below sandstone walls and monuments as it twists itself through lush river-side growth. It is an especially memorable region for me because it was here that I got my closest look in the wild of the magnificent gray fox.

I floated to the left of the large mid-channel boulder at mile 154.3, and my eyes fell upon the fox taking a drink. Not fifteen feet from each other, our startled gazes met and he gracefully darted through the brush. It was a two-second thrill that I'll never forget. And, another example of what would have been lost had Cliff Dam been approved and built.

I highly recommend taking a short hike up any of the small slot canyons on the right. The views from above are magnificent.

Mile 154.1 - 1+ rapid.

Mile 154.6 - The cliffy topography begins to open up. You run a fun long riffle where a couple of small drainages enter on the right and left.

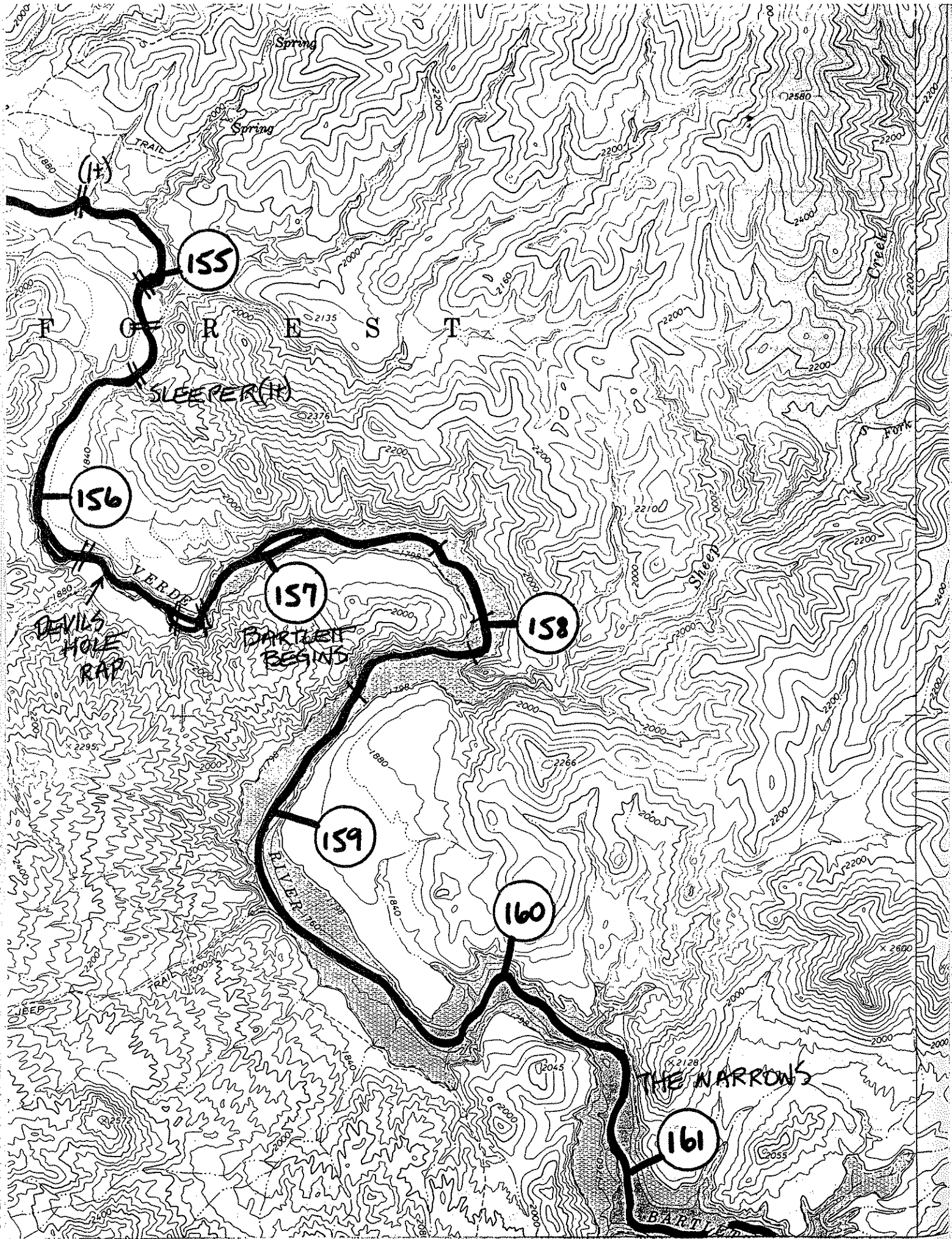
Mile 155.0 - Elevation 1,810 - At miles 155.0 and 155.2, you may run a couple of low level riffles.

Mile 155.4 - "Sleeper" Rapid. I coined the name for this Class I+ rapid after two distinctly different events happened during my first two trips down here. During my first run, I was lazy and nonchalant under the gorgeous spring skies, and I capsized! "Sleeper" event number 1.

"Sleeper" event number 2 happened after I'd run this relatively easy rock-dodging drop. I pulled over to explore and have lunch. After my lunch settled in, I was about ready to nod off comfortably in my lawn chair when an increasingly thunderous noise jarred me fully awake. A small plane with wings dang near vertical, bodaciously roared by not thirty feet off the water, and, too



~ Gauging Station - Mile 153.9 ~



(15)

155

F O R R E S T

SLEEPER (H)

156

VERDE

DEVILS HOLE RAP

157

BARTLET BEGINS

158

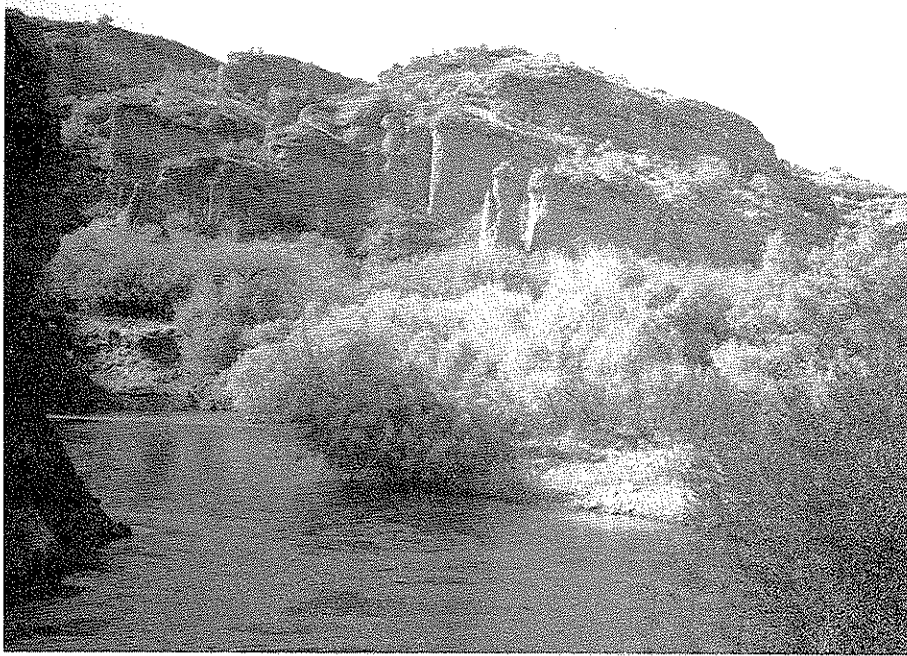
159

160

THE NARROWS

161

BARTLET



~ Mile 154.2 ~

close to my little ole head! I suppose you can find Sunday drivers just about anywhere these days! If you are awake, "Sleeper" is a mild, yet playful rapid. It could be a II in high water.

Mile 156.0 - Elevation 1,800.

Mile 156.3 - A nice little drop – one of the last before Bartlett Lake when it is at capacity.

Mile 156.4 - Devil's Hole RAP.

Mile 156.7 - At the left turn elbow, you'll run the last of the riffles. If it weren't for the obvious high water stains upon the shores, you could imagine yourself just dropping into a classic and lovely Verde pool! The sad reality is, however, that the lake, the Verde's largest of "pools," has begun.

If Bartlett is very low, you may encounter small rapids at miles 157.7, 158.0, 158.1 and 158.4.

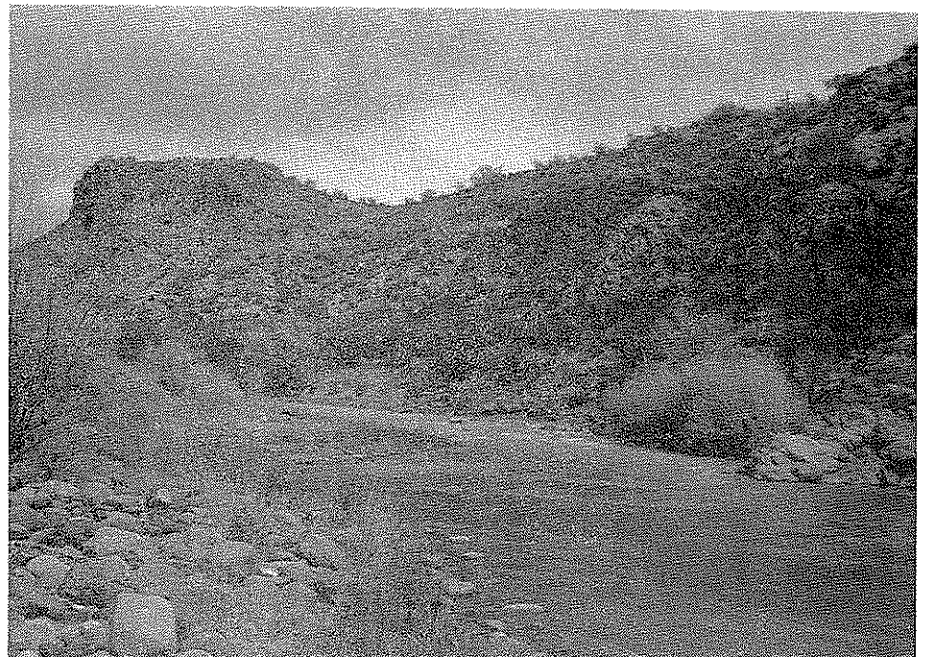
Mile 157.0 - Elevation 1,780 - All elevations from here to the dam are based on the ancestral river bed.

It is tranquil and lovely in the upper reaches. Here the shores are almost a stone's throw apart. Beautiful and pure Sonoran desert terrain will accompany you as you paddle "downstream."

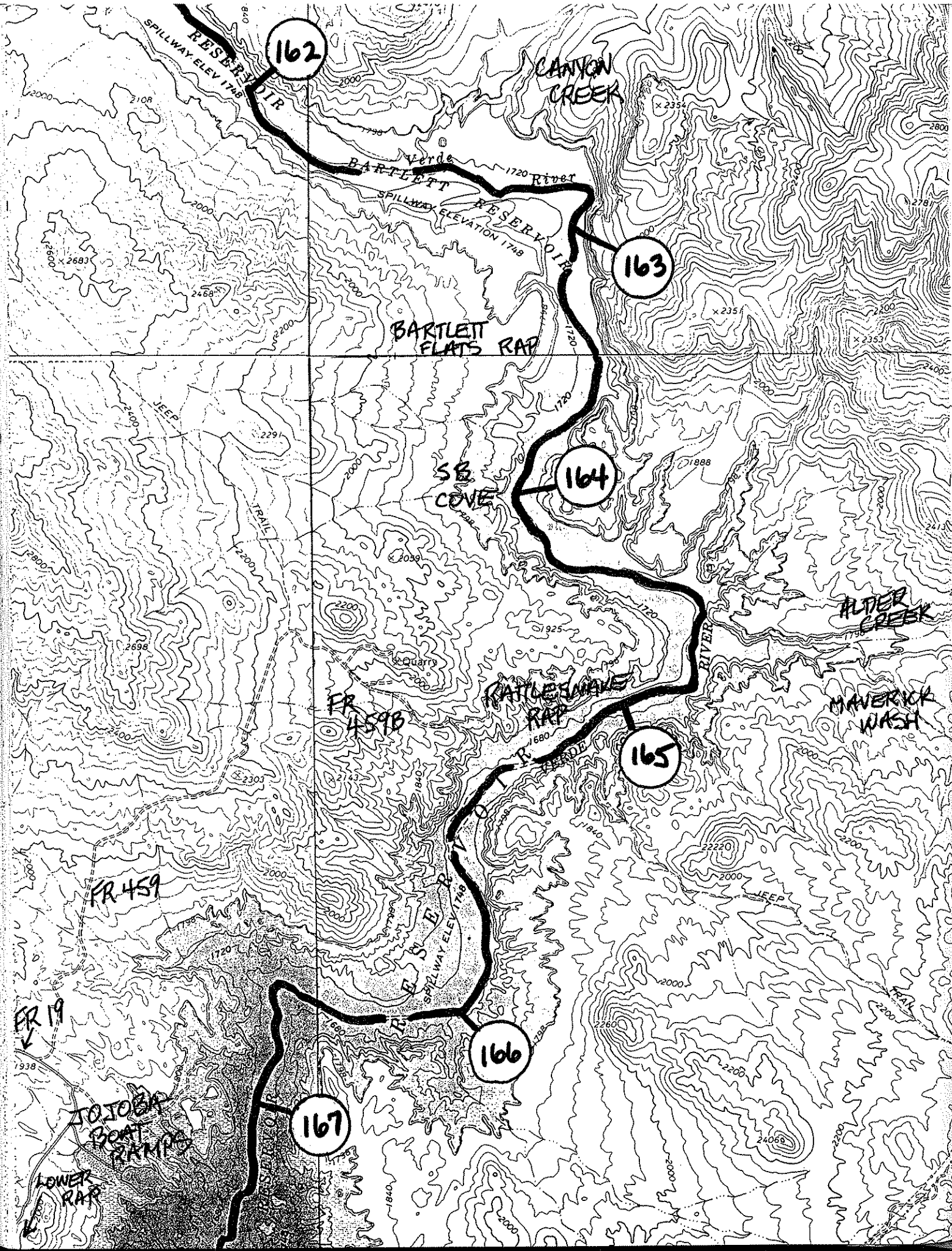
Mile 158.0 - Elevation 1,770 - If Bartlett is down, you'll still be upon the flowing Verde, but after M. 156, there are few riffles to speak of. The Verde simply plods along through the strangely desolate canyon floor.

People who like treasure hunting may want to explore these upper reaches when the lake is down. All manner of boater's toys and tools can be scavenged.

Mile 158.2 - Sheep Creek enters on the left. Even in very dry times, you'll likely find some water if you walk a way up this lovely and lush creek bed.



~ "Sleeper" - Mile 155.4 - 300 cfs ~





~ Mile 162 - Still some flow with Bartlett very low ~

Mile 159.0 - Elevation 1,760 - Boats, boats, boats from now on in.

Mile 160.0 - Elevation 1,740.

Mile 160.5 - The Narrows.

Mile 161.0 - Elevation 1,730.

Mile 162.0 - Elevation 1,720.

Mile 162.5 - Bartlett Flats RAP on the right and the nifty inlet to Canyon Creek on the left.

Mile 163.0 - Elevation 1,710.

Mile 164.0 - Elevation 1,700 - S B Cove RAP.

Mile 165.0 - Elevation 1,680 - Rattlesnake RAP. Upstream from

the east, enter Alder Creek and Maverick Mtn. Wash.

Mile 166.0 - Elevation 1,670.

Mile 167.0 - Elevation 1,650 - Jojoba Ramp and RAP.

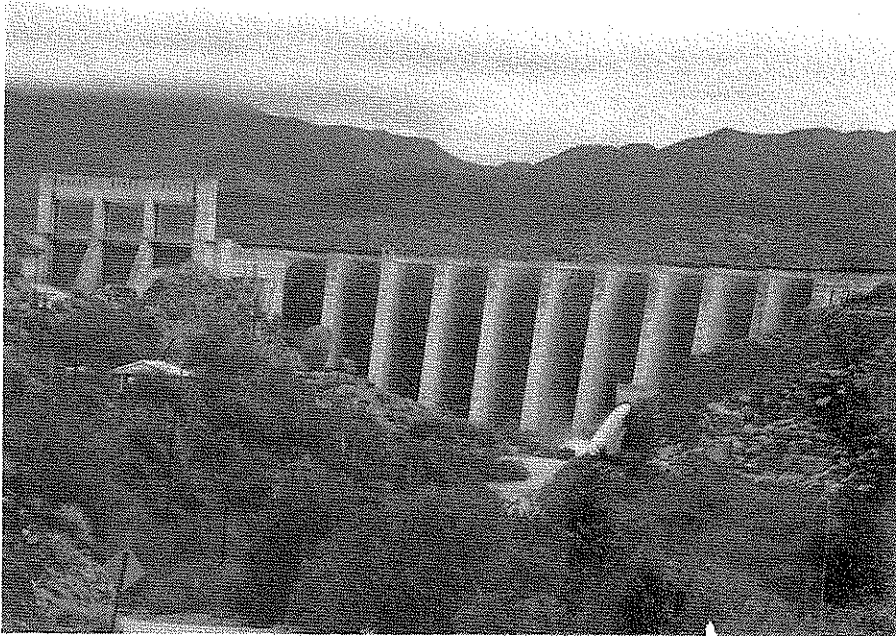
Mile 168.0 - Elevation 1,640.

Mile 169.0 - Elevation 1,620 - Bartlett Dam. There she stands hidden till the last stroke. So ends the pinch of the dam's run.



~ Main Jojoba Boat Ramp - Mile 167.0 ~
129

BARTLETT DAM (M. 169) TO THE SALT RIVER CONFLUENCE (M. 195) “THE LAST GASP OF THE VERDE”



~ Mile 169 - Bartlett Dam ~

- Total River Miles - 26 miles
- Elevation Drop - 1,600 to 1,320
- Average Drop - 10 feet per mile
- Class - Class I with one Class II rapid at “Last Gasp”
- Topo Maps - Bartlett Dam, Fort McDowell and Granite Reef Dam
- Shuttle Time - Three to four hours
- Days Needed - Two or more. A long day trip is possible for strong paddlers who have healthy flow (500 or more cfs).

RIVER ACCESS POINTS

~ RAP ~

sorry sight amidst such splendid desert scenery.

Needle Rock - (M. 175.5) - From your put-in at the dam, proceed back out the Bartlett Road to Cave

Riverside Campground M. 169.5 - Please see the previous section for directions to Bartlett Lake. Just before you reach the parking and boat ramps for the lake, take a right at the sign for Riverside Campground. It is a couple of miles down FR 162 to the multiple RAPS below the dam. Getting right to the river’s edge may require a four-wheel drive vehicle because of the sand and wide expanses of river rock.

Mile 171.0 - Contrary to the topo maps, there is no motorized access here due to the protected wildlife breeding area. As you’ll see, this spot suffers severe abuse nonetheless from boon docking litterbugs – creating a



~ Mile 171.0 ~



~ Needle Rock - Mile 175.5 ~

Creek. Three miles before you reach Cave Creek, there is a stop sign at Pima Road. Turn left on Pima and go five miles until you reach Dynamite/Rio Verde Road on the left. Head east on Dynamite for 13 miles. After several miles of development, this straight-as-a-string road descends steadily through some pretty desert. You'll have nice views of the mountains surrounding the upper part of the run. Where Dynamite/Rio Verde Road stops and turns south, you'll see signs for FR 20 and Needle Rock. It is three miles to the Needle Rock RAP. FR 20 is passable by two-wheel vehicles except during wet weather. I'm told that Needle Rock is also accessible by four-wheel vehicles down the bed of Camp Creek from the Bartlett Road. This sounds chancy at best as a shuttle option, so it's probably best left to the dallying ORV yahoos who frequently torment all of the desertescapes around Needle Rock.

Mile 178.0 - From the junction of Rio Verde Road and FR 20 Needle Rock Road, you can take FR 160 due east for less than a mile to a public access area north of the private Box Bar/Rio Verde Ranch. Four-wheel is recommended. Because this RAP is halfway

between the dam and the Fort McDowell RAP, it could be used as a put-in or take-out for day trips.

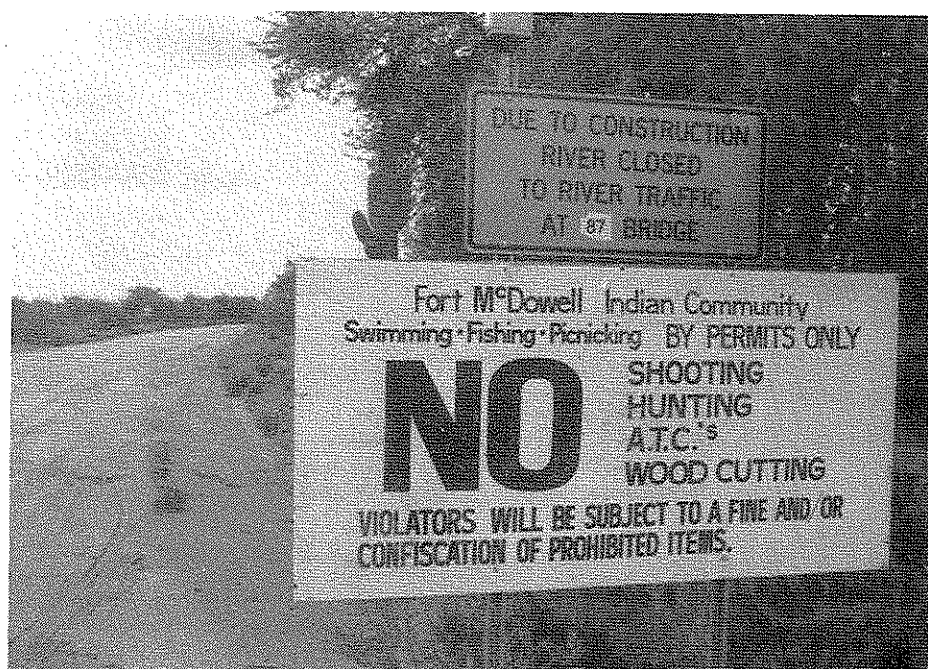
The Rio Verde Community (Miles 179 to 181) - There are numerous RAPS noted on forest maps around here, but I've not bothered checking on them since the semi-private development of Rio Verde blossomed to life as a retirees' golf haven in the 1980's. Access is a possibility, but I'd inquire locally before counting on it.

Fort McDowell and Salt River Reservations (Miles 181 to 195) -

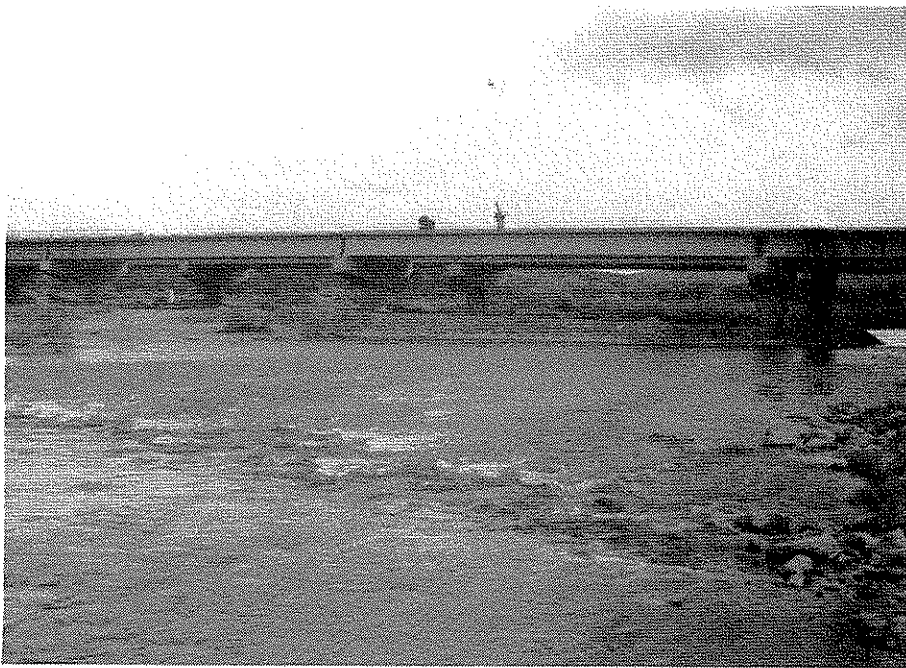
From mile 181 to the confluence, both shores of the Verde are on Tribal Lands. Please see the

Cautions Section information about access, camping, off-road travel, fishing and hunting restrictions.

Fort McDowell (Mile 187.8) - From the Rio Verde Community, you can take the Reservation dirt road south for about six miles until you reach pavement in Fort McDowell proper. This road is easily passable when dry, but can become a mud bog in places during rainy times. Go around through Fountain Hills to Shea Boulevard and Beeline Highway if you are

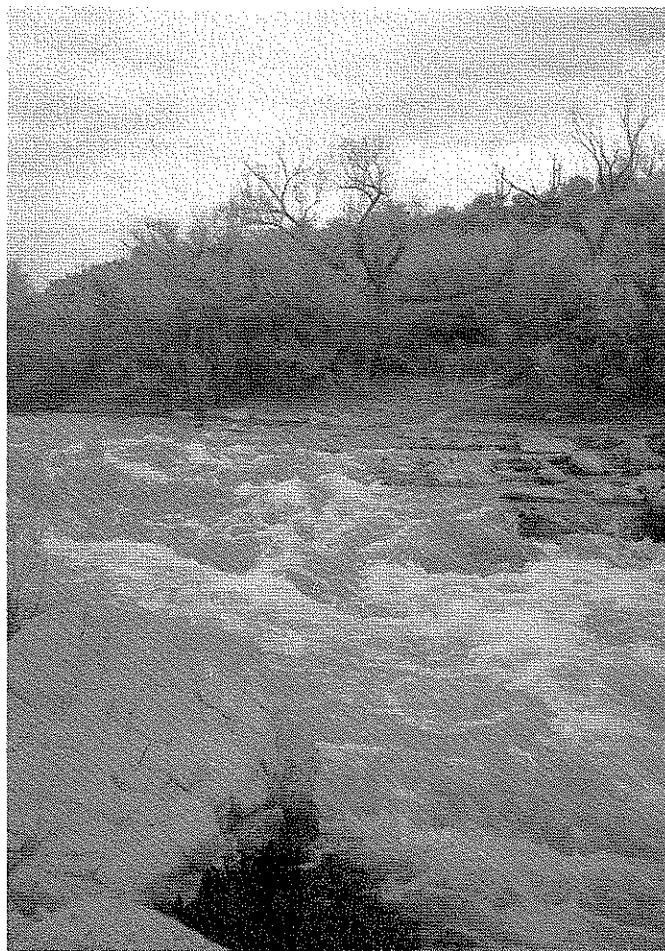


~ Fort McDowell Reservation Road ~



~ Mile 192.4 ~

unsure of the conditions. From Fort McDowell, it is less than a half-mile down the road that appears on the topos to the RAP. Since the floods, the river channel has veered well left of the RAP, so a lengthy carry can



~ "Last Gasp" - Mile 193.7 ~

be expected.

From the down-river end of the reservation, this popular RAP can be reached by taking the reservation road off Beeline Highway 87 up from the bridge at M. 192.4. From that turnoff, and the infamous Casino, it is about four miles to the RAP.

Beeline Highway 87 Bridge (M. 192.4) - This is the most common take-out for float trips from above (sadly so, I'd say, because many will miss the "Last Gasp" of the Verde). Although it is officially on reservation lands, the tribe seems to be very tolerant towards its use as a floaters' RAP.

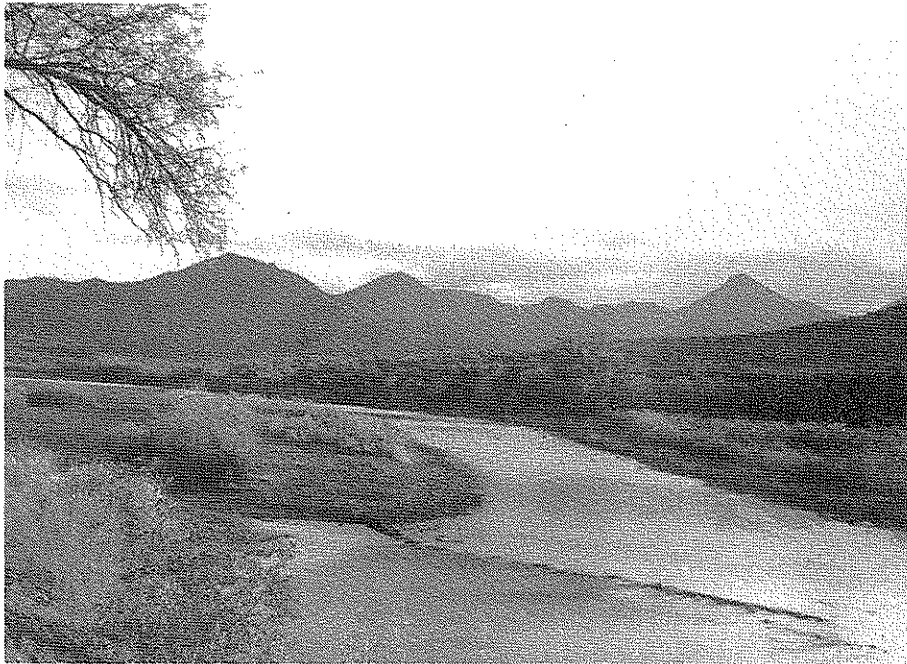
The bridge RAP is most easily accessed by taking the dirt road adjacent to Beeline on the north side.

Mile 194.0 - Here is the RAP that I most commonly use because it is just below "Last Gasp" rapid. Take the Salt River Reservation and recreation road south from Beeline for about two miles to the point where the river meets the road. Parking is not permitted in this narrow place, but you should be able to access the river via the small river roads in the vicinity.

Mile 195.0 - Confluence Road. About three miles from beeline where the Reservation road elbows right near the filtration plant, a dirt road spurs to the left to the heavily used confluence recreation site.

Floaters may also pull out on the Salt River side of the confluence at Phon D. Sutton and Granite Reef Recreation areas. Both of these can be reached via Beeline and Bush Highways and Saguaro Lake Road.

Final Notes on RAPS - Visitors to this stretch are advised to have road maps and the Tonto National Forest map (as well as the topos) with them as they paddle or shuttle. Things change mighty quickly in these parts.



~ Upriver from Needle Rock RAP - Mile 176 ~

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS, HIGHLIGHTS AND CAUTIONS

First, a small grain of Bartlett Dam history: Although economic and legal battles for Verde River water storage projects had raged since before World War I, it took until 1935 for the Paradise Water Users Association (primarily an agricultural group and dovetail of the SRP) and the Federal Government to come to terms and enact contracts to construct Bartlett. When the first of the two major dams of the Verde was completed in 1939, Bartlett provided an extra 180,000 acre feet of storage for the 13,000 square mile Verde-Salt watershed, and it had the distinction of being the world's highest multiple arch dam.

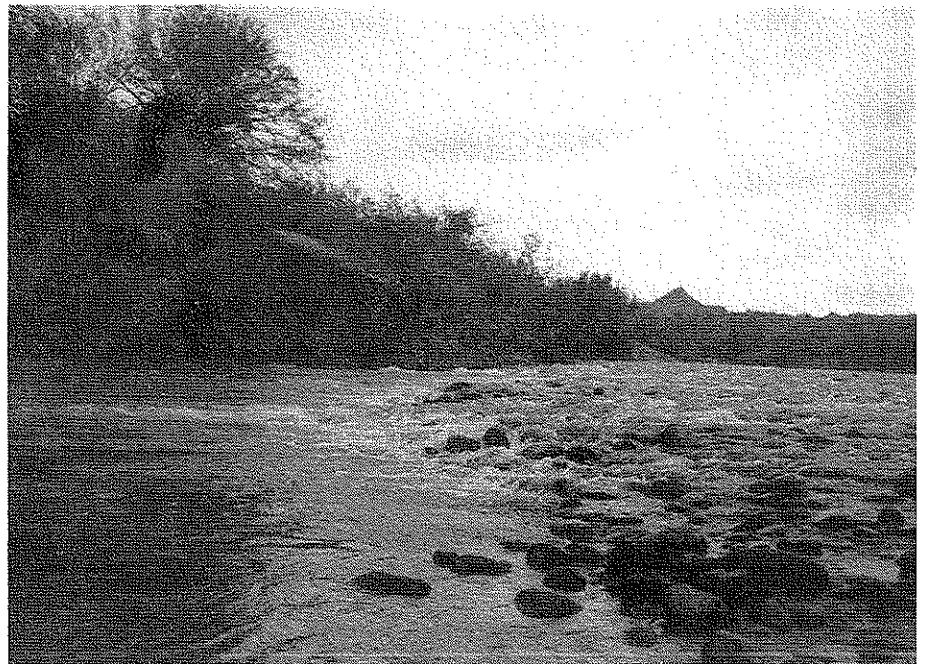
Like the Horseshoe run, the flow of the Verde here is almost entirely dependent upon SRP's releases for their customers in the Valley. Mother Nature, economics and contracts, rather than floatworthy flow, dictate how much green gold goes down. At times, the releases from Stewart Mountain Dam on the Salt may be enough to fill the bill, so

flow from Bartlett may be choked to 100 cfs or less. It is a mandatory caution not only to call the flow line, but also to talk with SRP hydrologists just prior to your trip.

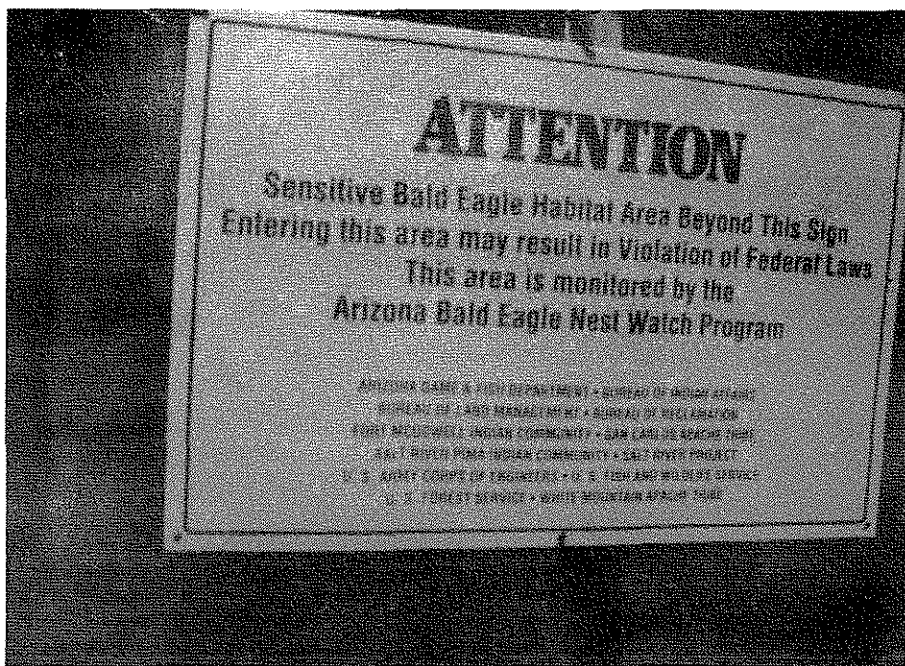
The 1993 floods befuddled the Verde's course here (especially from Needle Rock to the bridge) perhaps more than any other stretch. They cut such a wide swath of channel destruction that it may be decades before the Verde regains some semblance of unity. The poor river meanders, fans out and becomes paper thin like peeling skin in so many places that even between 100 and 200 cfs you really have to pay attention to keep from poling and walking too much. You've got to be

a dedicated and patient low-water enthusiast if you float here during meager releases.

Needless to say, severe damage was done as well to the trees, shrubs and delicate desert shorelines in 1993, so floaters should always be aware of undercut banks and strainers. Debris has been deposited in several places that may require you to walk or line. By whatever means possible, avoid broaching on any strainers or debris. At best you may flush free, but at



~ Mile 174.2 ~



~ Mile 181.3 ~

worst you may have a wrapped boat and entrapped boaters.

Alcohol is involved in almost all of the boating, tubing and swimming accidents upon this heavily used stretch. Moderate your consumption, drink a lot of fresh water and wear protective clothing to avoid dehydration and impaired judgment.

The Class II rapid at "Last Gasp" about a mile from the confluence is the one and only noteworthy drop. In elevated flows, however, there are many chutes and rock bars that can have some push and waves. The floods created new riffles and washed some away, but surprisingly most remain in close proximity to their pre-flood locations. All hell can break loose, but elevation drop remains generally the same.

From the dam to Needle Rock, you'll be treated to some of the most gorgeous desert scenery anywhere. People who dismiss this stretch from their to-float lists have probably visited only the flattened and abused areas of the lower reaches. Mile 169 to Mile 175 is a dandy of a day trip.

What the whole of this run may be

lacking in eye-catching topography, it more than compensates with its rich array of wildlife. Winter birding counts can exceed a hundred species and it is not uncommon to see beaver, coyote, deer, javelina and enormous bass and catfish. Bald eagles are making a fine comeback here, especially where you'll see signs for protected habitat around Mile 181.3 and Mile 171.0.

History buffs will find points of interest on the Fort McDowell Reservation. The Fort McDowell site shown on the topo near M. 187.8 was an important military post established for protection of settlers throughout central Arizona during

the wars against the Tonto and Pinal Apache tribes from 1865 to 1886. Its function as a post ended in 1890, and by Executive Order it was established as a reservation in 1903 for the Yavapai and Mohave Apaches.

Camp Reno, a small outpost of Fort McDowell from 1866 to 1868, was located near the junction of Beeline Highway and the reservation road. Near that spot as well is the burial site for the famed Apache physician, Dr. Carlos Montezuma. Historical markers for Camp



~ Near Mile 187.8 ~

Reno and Dr. Montezuma stood near the junction prior to the ADOT road construction in the early 1990's. I hope they reappear.

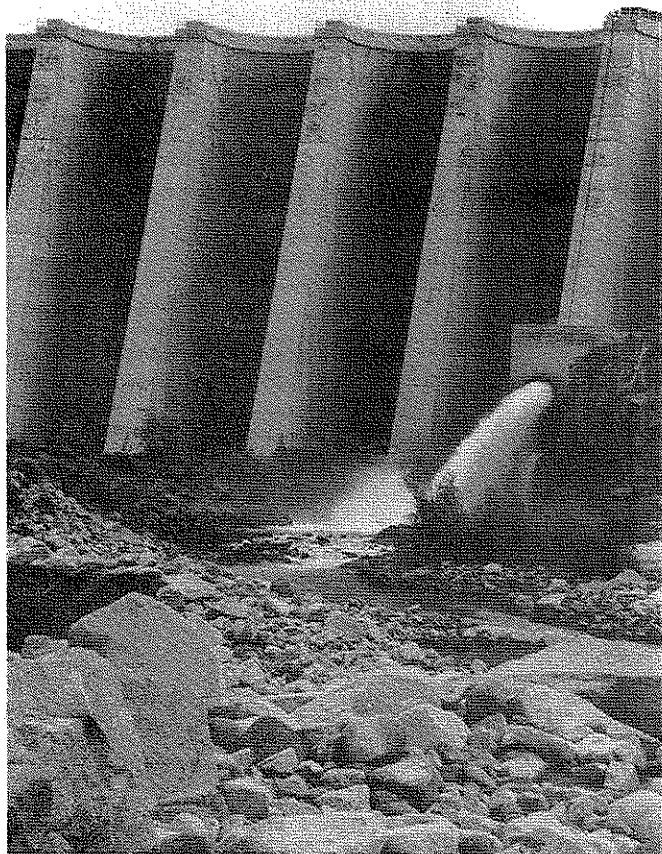
If you plan to camp, hunt, fish, gather wood or travel off-road anywhere between M. 181 and the confluence, you must request a permit. Check at the store near the junction or contact tribal offices for more information.

Now, on down the last glimpses and "Last Gasp" of the Verde River

RIVER MILE LOG

Mile 169 - Elevation 1,620 - Putting in right below the dam is pretty well off limits now.

Mile 169.3 - Riverside Camp Areas and floaters' access begins. For the next half mile or so, you'll have numerous choices for put-ins. You may be wise



~ Mile 169 ~

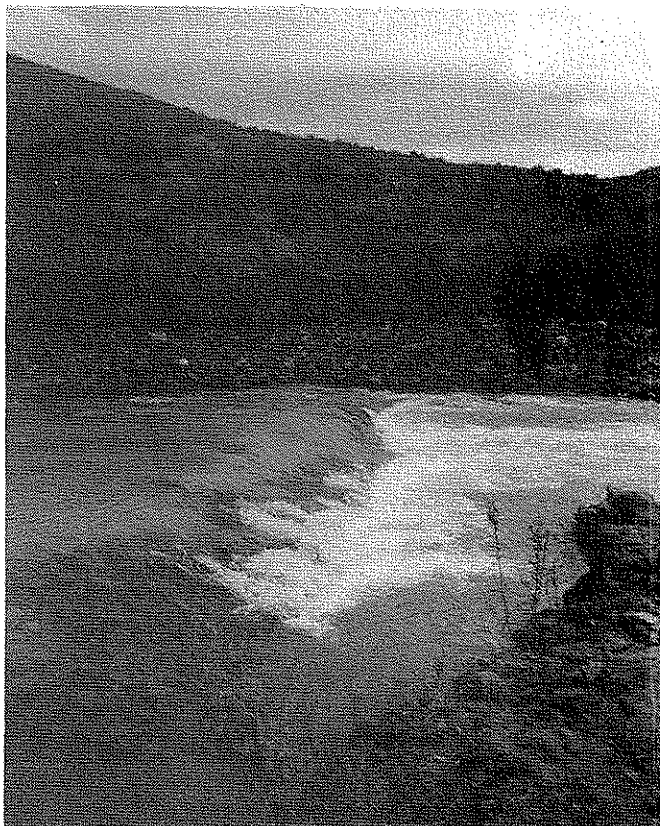
to scout your RAP on foot before driving down unless you have a high-clearance four-wheel drive vehicle.

Mile 169.5 - The current can be pretty swift here during high flows. Around 169.5 you'll hit some small rock bar riffles very characteristic of what you'll see all the way to Needle Rock.

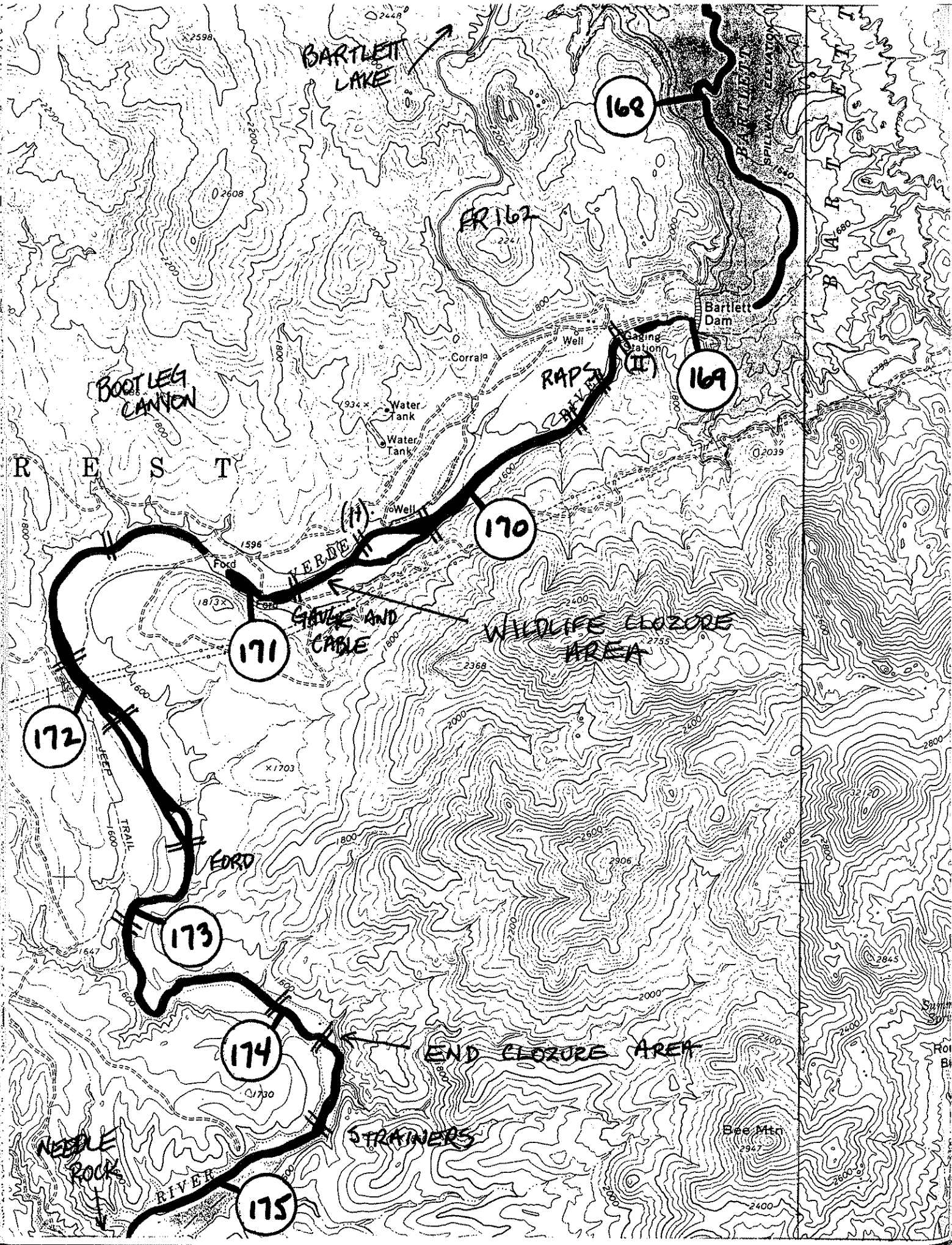
Mile 170.0 - Elevation 1,590 - Lots of folks and lots of impact at the hub of Riverside Recreation area on the right. Most casual floaters and tubers choose this spot for their put-in.

Mile 170.2 - The river pools a bit behind the small riffle at M. 170.2. Contrary to the topos, there is only one channel to the right here now. Later years? Who knows?

Mile 170.4 - Below the house on the right at M. 170.4, low water boaters should beware of a small ledge with surprising recirculating power. Running far left is pretty clear. This is a wash in higher flows.



~ Mile 170.4 ~



BARTLETT LAKE

168

FR 162

169

RAPS

BOOTLEG CANYON

R E S T

170

STOVE AND CABLE

WILDLIFE CLOSURE AREA

171

172

173

174

END CLOSURE AREA

STRAINERS

175

NEEDLE ROCK

RIVER

Bee Mtn

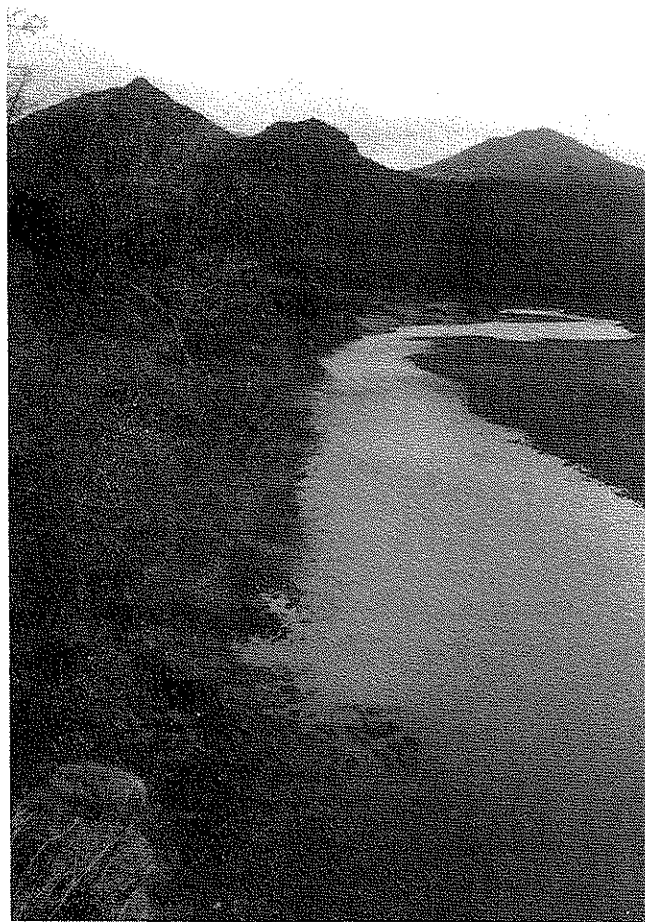
Mile 170.9 - Here is a ford and small riffle.

Mile 171.0 - Elevation 1,580 - You are entering a quiet area for the next three miles due to federally protected wildlife habitats. This may not be posted near the river, but it is up on the hill to the right where FR 162 terminates. There is no stopping or camping until mile 174.0 from December 1st until June 30th.

Just below mile 171.0 you'll see a gauge station, trolley and another ford. You'll also have great upstream views of the rugged Bee Mountain area.

Mile 171.4 - Boot Leg Canyon enters on the right creating a small riffle. You are entering into the remotest region of this run. The conglomerate formations on the right are one and the same as those that you'll see at Needle Rock. In wet weather, you'll be treated to the sights of springs and fern growth upon the slopes at this turn. The left shore has been completely shorn of what was once cascading rivulets and lush loveliness.

Mile 172.0 - Elevation 1,560 - This still may be the most extraordinary mile of this run despite its altered state. Just prior to and soon after M. 172.0 you'll paddle a couple of small riffles, but otherwise the channel is now fairly typical. Prior to 1993, it was anything but that! The Verde used to dispense its 20-foot vertical drop through dense and marshy meanders full of



~ Upstream from Mile 171.1 ~

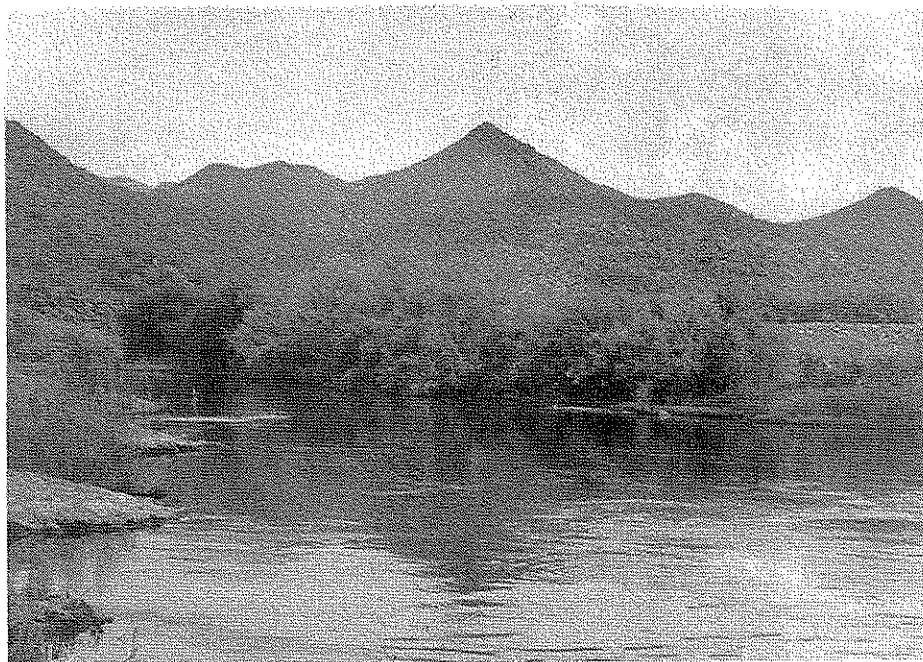
little drops, chutes, rock bars and cascading spillovers all the way to Mile 172.7. I look forward to watching for recovery of unique areas like these.

There is a small S-curve rif at the ford near Mile 172.7.

Mile 173.0 - Elevation 1,550 - At the left turn you may run a riffle of little consequence except during high flows where the unwary could get swept into the right wall.

Most of mile 173 is now devoid of growth, so for a while it may seem like you are paddling by bombed-out levees.

As you reach the end of this serpentine mile, you'll likely start to see more ORV impact, as if on cue, because of the return to unrestricted vehicular access.



~ Bee Mountain - Mile 173.5 - Pre-1993 ~



~ Low Water Strainers - Mile 174.5 ~

Mile 174.0 - Elevation 1,540 - There is a small riffle just before M. 174.0, and then another at 174.2. Take care when you start nearing M. 174.5. The river channel has worked far left and become completely choked by trees. In low water, the only prudent choice is to walk the shore and line your gear. During high flows, you'll likely have enough room to pass safely, but stay heads up anyway.

Mile 175.0 - Elevation 1,530 - Be alert for more brush and strainers as you descend the turn to Needle Rock.

Mile 175.5 - Needle Rock Recreation Area. If you paddle to the right as you near this RAP, you will go through "The Maze." Unless you have to worry about dodging fishing lines and bloated waders, you'll likely enjoy this paddle through the riffles that snake you around the nifty formations of Needle Rock. Once through "The Maze," you may just want to put your head down, put some elbow grease to your strokes and get-thee-gone downriver.

Also called Castle Rock by old timers and boon dockers, Needle Rock during a rockin' summer weekend may seem like Arizona's fifth largest city to boaters who have just left the relatively quiet confines of the upper reach of this run. This place is a trip at peak heat times!

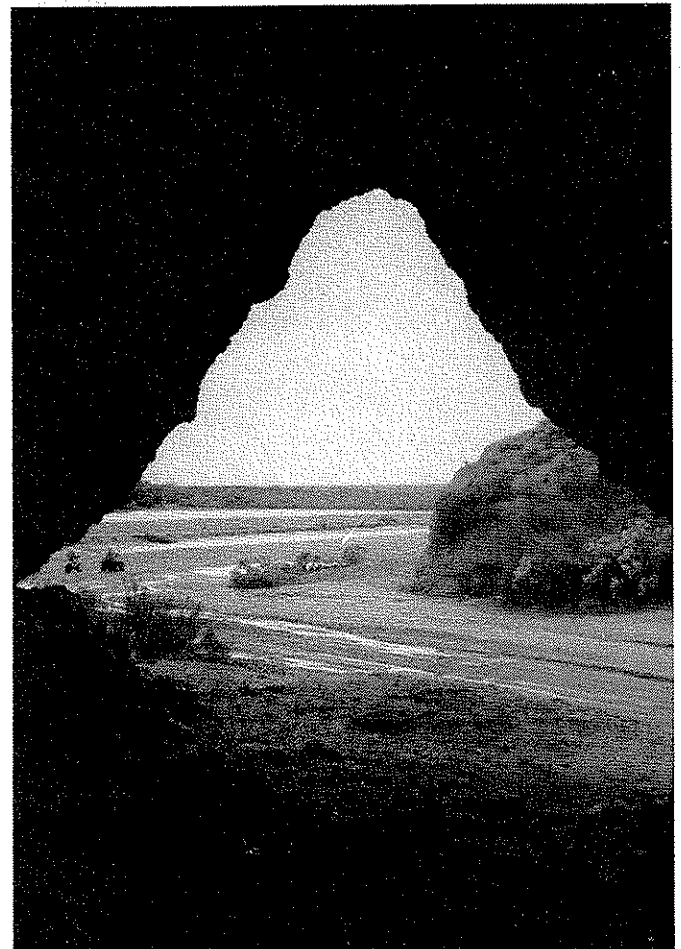
During cooler and quieter seasons, it is worth the time to either hike up Camp Creek or scramble atop the walls for spectacular views.

Mile 176.0 - Elevation 1,520 - The Needle Rock pool ends with an easy riffle. The channel runs right and directly below the Forest Service Campground for over half a mile. Be sure to announce your presence to any unaware plinkers on the shore - gun-play is very common around here!

At Mile 176.6 and 176.9, you may run small riffles and chutes.

Mile 177.0 - Elevation 1,520 - This is a rather sluggish mile until Mile 177.7 where, in low flow, you may encounter a little chute.

On overnights, I usually end up camping around here because it is sufficiently below the ruckus at Needle Rock and still well above the ranch and Reservation. Finding a nice spot on the less abused left shore is never a problem.



~ Camp Creek and ORVS at Mile 175.5 ~

176

177

178

179

180

CAMP CREEK

Rock F

VERDE

NEEDLE ROCK

FR 20

SCOTTSDALE

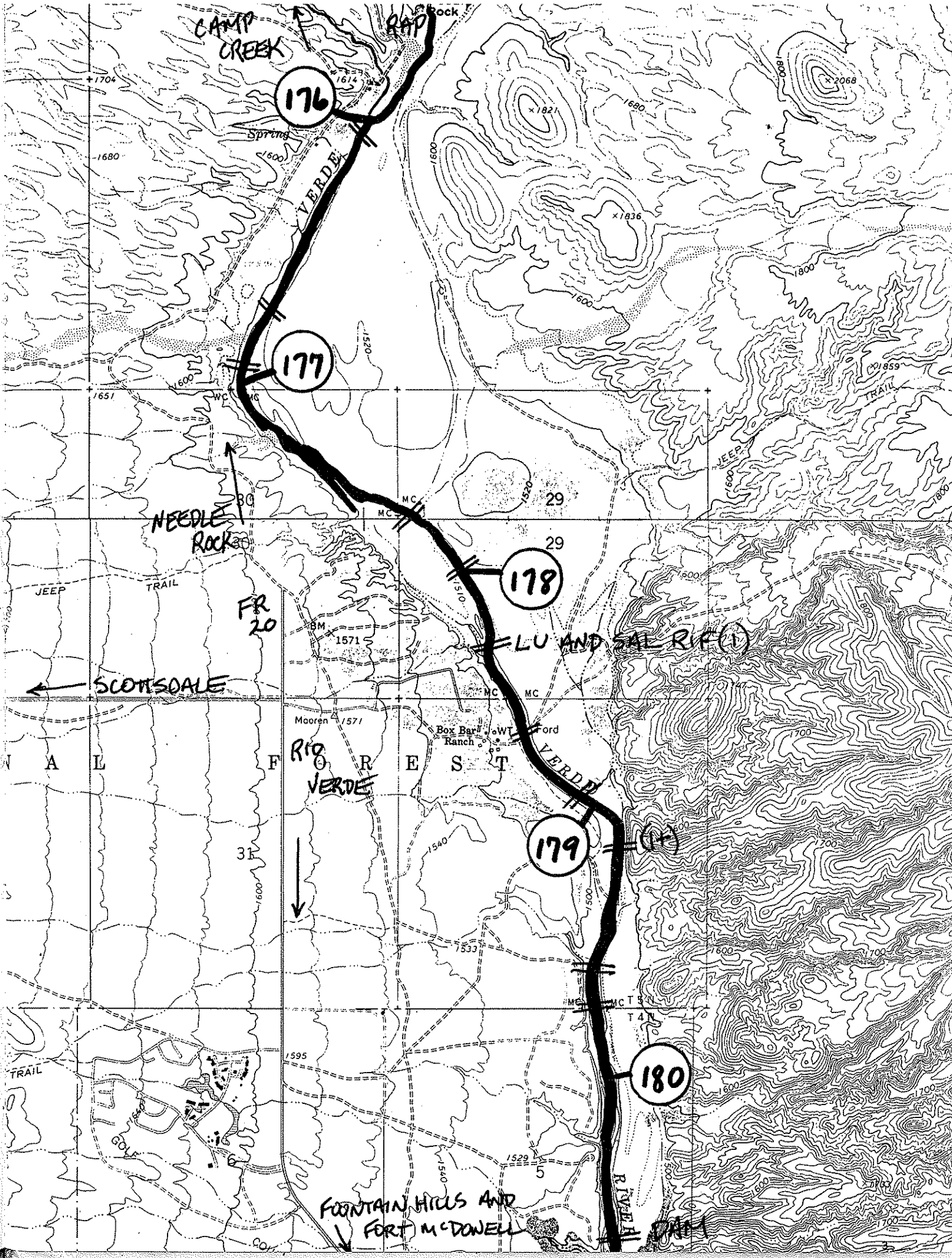
W A L F R I O R E S T

VERDE

LU AND SAL RIF (1)

FOUNTAIN HILLS AND FORT McDOWELL

RIVER



Mile 178.0 - Elevation 1,510 - Typically, there is a small riffle at M. 178.0 and then a riffle and chute at M. 178.3. From M. 178.3 to about M. 179, the right shore is private land. The topos show this as Box Bar Ranch, but I believe it is now called the Rio Verde Ranch. You'll likely see some folks here who have driven in on FR 160. Around M. 178.5, things get more interesting again. There is a little more contour to the land than the last two miles and you'll paddle a lovely little pool between two fun riffles at M. 178.6 and M. 178.9. Look for beaver and beaver sign in here.



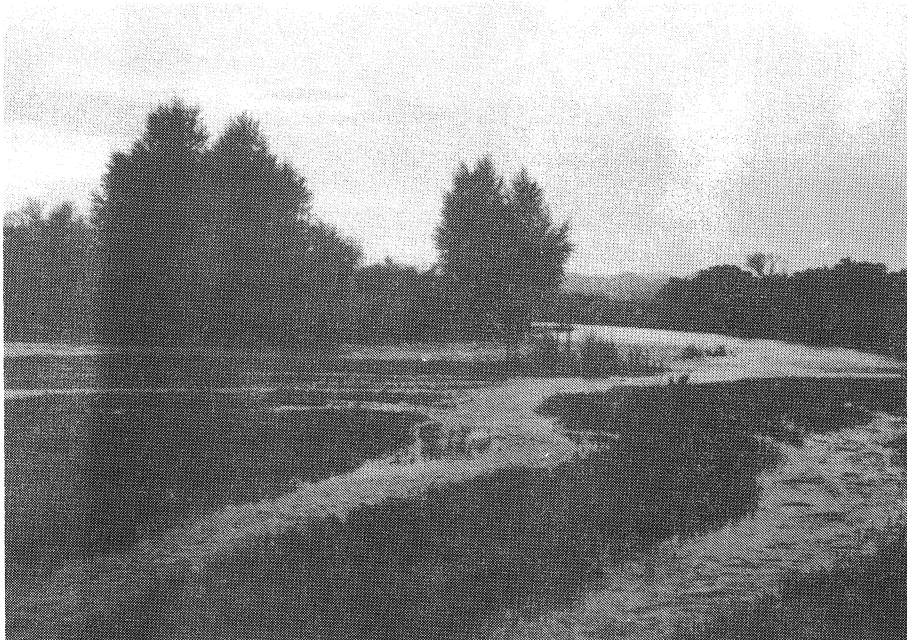
~ Mile 177.0 - 350 cfs ~

current only during heavy flows.

Mile 179.0 - Elevation 1,500 - There used to be a lovely and densely vegetated island surrounded by delicate braids and meanders here before 1993. Now? Not much to speak of.

Where the Verde turns due south at M. 179.1, you'll hit a nifty little riffle. Here and at a couple more places around the riffles at M. 179.6, you'll see a rare sight – actual exposed bedrock! The vertical drop doubles to 30 feet in this mile, perhaps explaining this anomaly. You're likely to notice any accelerated

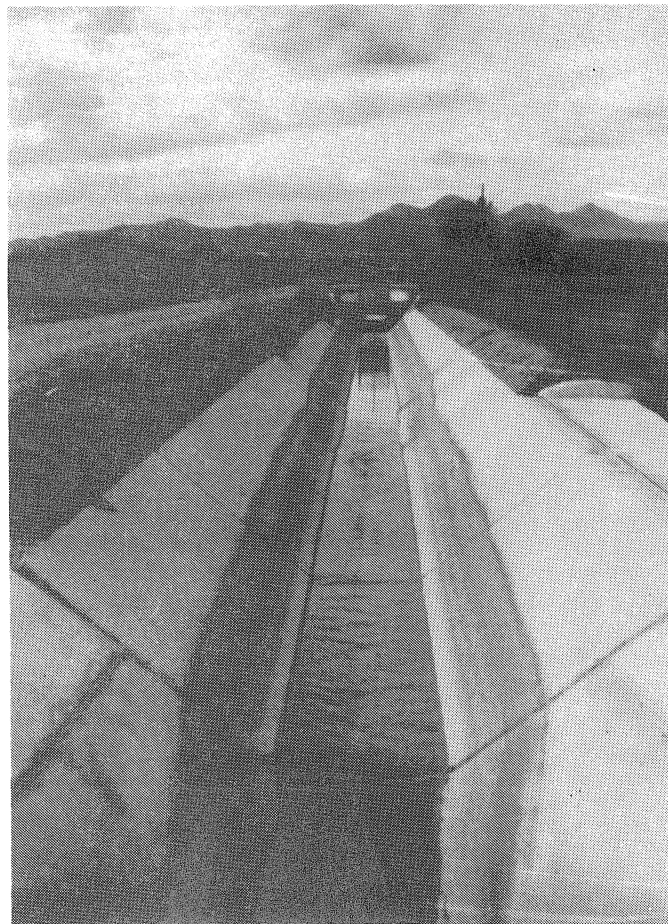
Mile 179.6 - While rock-knockin' through this low flow riffle in 1994, an immature bald eagle and I became instant friends. This splendid bird who may have been booted from the nest for the first time tried to ogle me and maintain forward flight at the same time. He'd crane his neck one way and then the other, and then turn and flap and almost stall as he tried to make direct passes about twenty feet above me. He quickly learned that circular surveillance was the more efficient means of checking me out. After a minute of awkward and amazing acrobatics, his curiosity was satisfied and he moseyed down river to continue his practice session. I couldn't help but chuckle wondering what his ma and pa, who must have been nearby, were thinking; and if they were equally amused!



~ Meanders and small island at Mile 179 prior to '93 ~

Mile 180.0 - Elevation 1,480 - At mile 180.6, you'll want to stay left to avoid the Jones' Ditch diversion dam. There usually is a little slot at the upriver end of the levees that you can skirt through. Jones' Ditch is one of the primary sources for Fort McDowell crop irrigation. Mile 180.0 is not a pretty sight.

~ Notes ~



~ Fort McDowell Irrigation Ditch ~

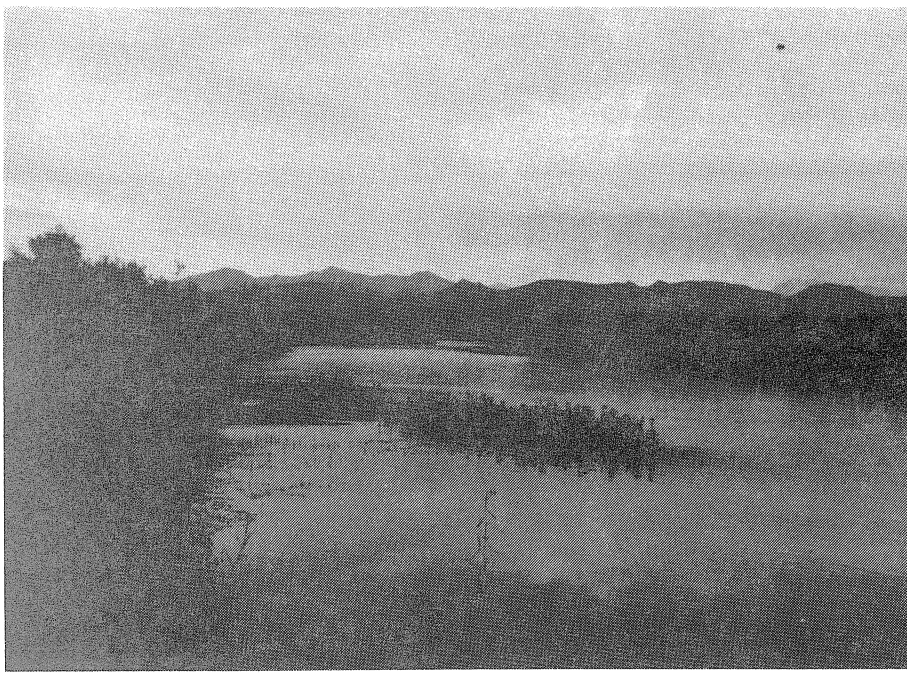
Mile 180.7 - Entering Reservation Lands.

Mile 181.0 - Elevation 1,470 - Just prior to this mile marker, Malpais Canyon enters on the left and you'll drop through a small riffle. The channel moves to the left and you'll pass by a near pristine mesquite bosque and protected Bald Eagle Habitat Area. This shore is strictly off limits to any intrusive activity.

Mile 181.3 - Be very cautious here! The Verde will take you into a squirrely area full of debris, strainers and undercut banks. Look well ahead, read the currents carefully and hop right out if it looks at all obstructed.

Mile 182.0 - Elevation 1,460 - Here the Verde is trying to regain its older right channel. In doing so, it has split into a myriad of small shallow braids. It looks as though the brush is rerooting well in mid-channel, so be watchful in years to come during pushy flow. Most of the flow reunites around M. 182.2.





~ Mile 184.0 ~

The remainder of M. 182.0 is sluggish and uneventful. Nice views of Four Peaks, however.

Mile 183.0 - Elevation 1,450 - You may run some small riffles at miles 183.3 and 183.9. At mile 183.5, you may notice irrigation water being recharged through a unique looking sluice and concrete spillway.

Mile 184.0 - Elevation 1,440 - The channel moves far left and you may run a small riffle at the base of the bedrock ledge. Not much more to speak of in this mile until M. 184.9 when you'll run a slightly steeper riffle as the channel veers to the right.

Mile 185.0 - Elevation 1,420 - The channel is split and riffles a bit at Mile 185.2. It is straight forward here until Mile 185.7 when the Verde's course changes again to the left and a small drop is encountered.

Mile 186.0 - Elevation 1,420 - Between miles 186.0 and 187.0, the Verde has cut a new channel well left of the old high and dry remnant. Boaters should use caution because the current can be swift and narrow

and is choked by debris and strainers in several places.

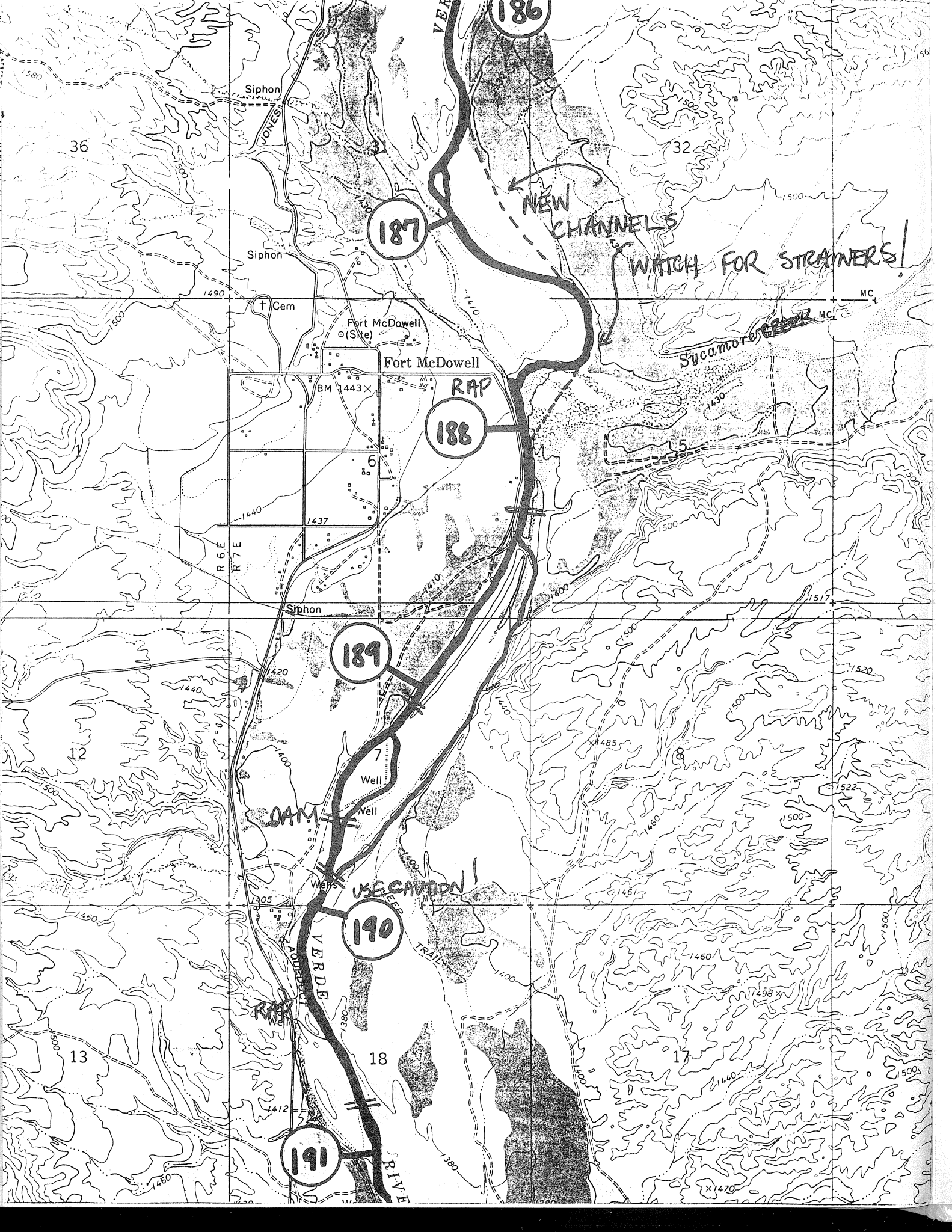
Mile 187.0 - Elevation 1,410 - The new left channel joins the old around M. 187.4 and then cuts southwest anew at the Fort McDowell RAP. The fourth Sycamore Creek of the Verde Watershed enters on the left near the R.A.P. This Sycamore originates in the Mazatzals in the vicinity of Sunflower. There are some mighty nice backpacking areas along this perennial stream that can be accessed off Highway 87 and FR 403 and 402. You've got to get up north a way until you reach terrain that ORV's can no longer travel and trample.

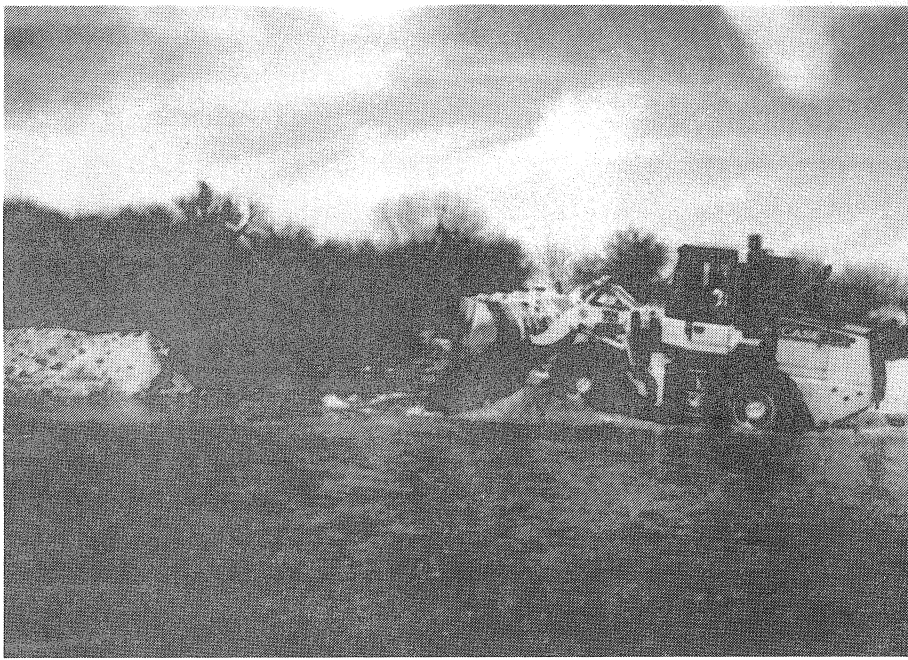
Mile 188.0 - Elevation 1,400 - You'll likely notice increased trash and people from here on down as access points are easier to come by. There are a couple of small riffles near M. 188.3, but that's about it in this run-of-the-mill mile.

Mile 189.0 - Elevation 1,390 - Here is another spot similar to the Jones' Ditch unnatural disaster at M. 180. There is some sort of intergovernmental agreement that allows the City of Phoenix to divert Verde



~ Upriver from Mile 187.0 ~





~ Mile 189.0 - Diversion Dam for Phoenix Wells ~

water to their wells located in several places between here and the bridge. Floods come and go and breach these dikes, so crews and Cats are regularly at work reconstructing them.

I happened to paddle by one day minutes before a workman would have dammed the main channel and perhaps left me walking the remainder of my journey. Some small consolation it was when he told me that there was always enough seepage to keep the Verde going. Sure, pal!

I don't mind telling you that a prayer for an intense and localized downpour crossed my mind at that moment. This *#!• really irks me!

Two small chutes may be encountered at the tail end of M. 189 where the Verde regroupes from the upstream diversionary assault.

Mile 190.0 - Elevation 1,380 - Several things happen in rapid succession here. At M. 190, you may notice recharge from the diversion above. When you reach the ford, start watching for concrete and metal scat in the channel that could severely damage your gear. All of this stuff was evidently placed to protect water works and aqueducts nearby. I believe the ford is used for those Cats I mentioned as well as machinery for nearby gravel and rock operations.

If you've seen enough, there is a RAP at M. 190.3.

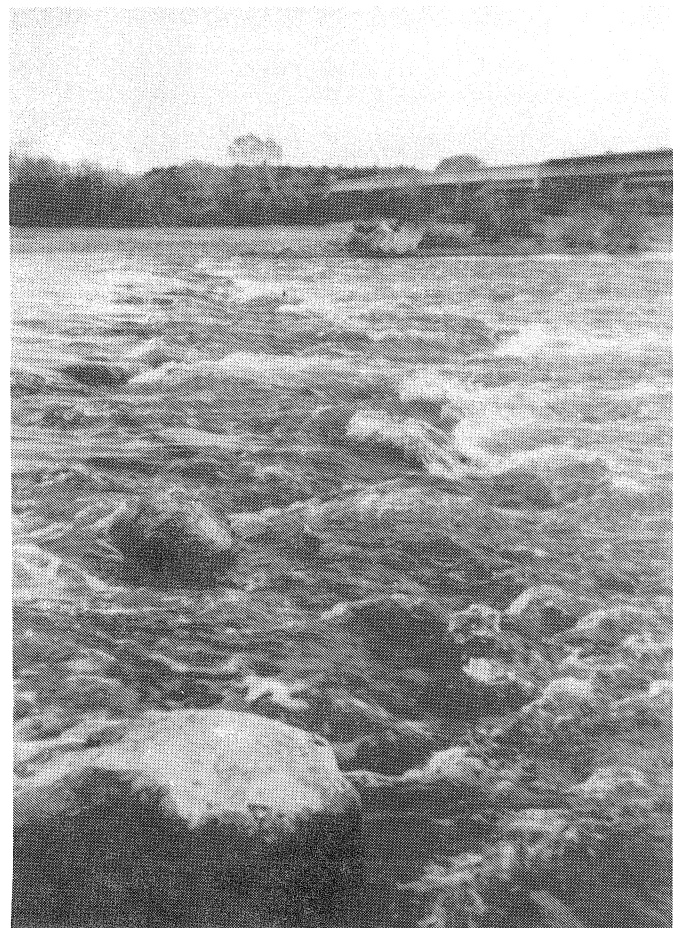
At M. 190.8, watch for a tricky spot with trees.

Mile 191.0 - Elevation 1,370 - You'll cross another ford at M. 191.3 and see more reconstructed well-works on the right.

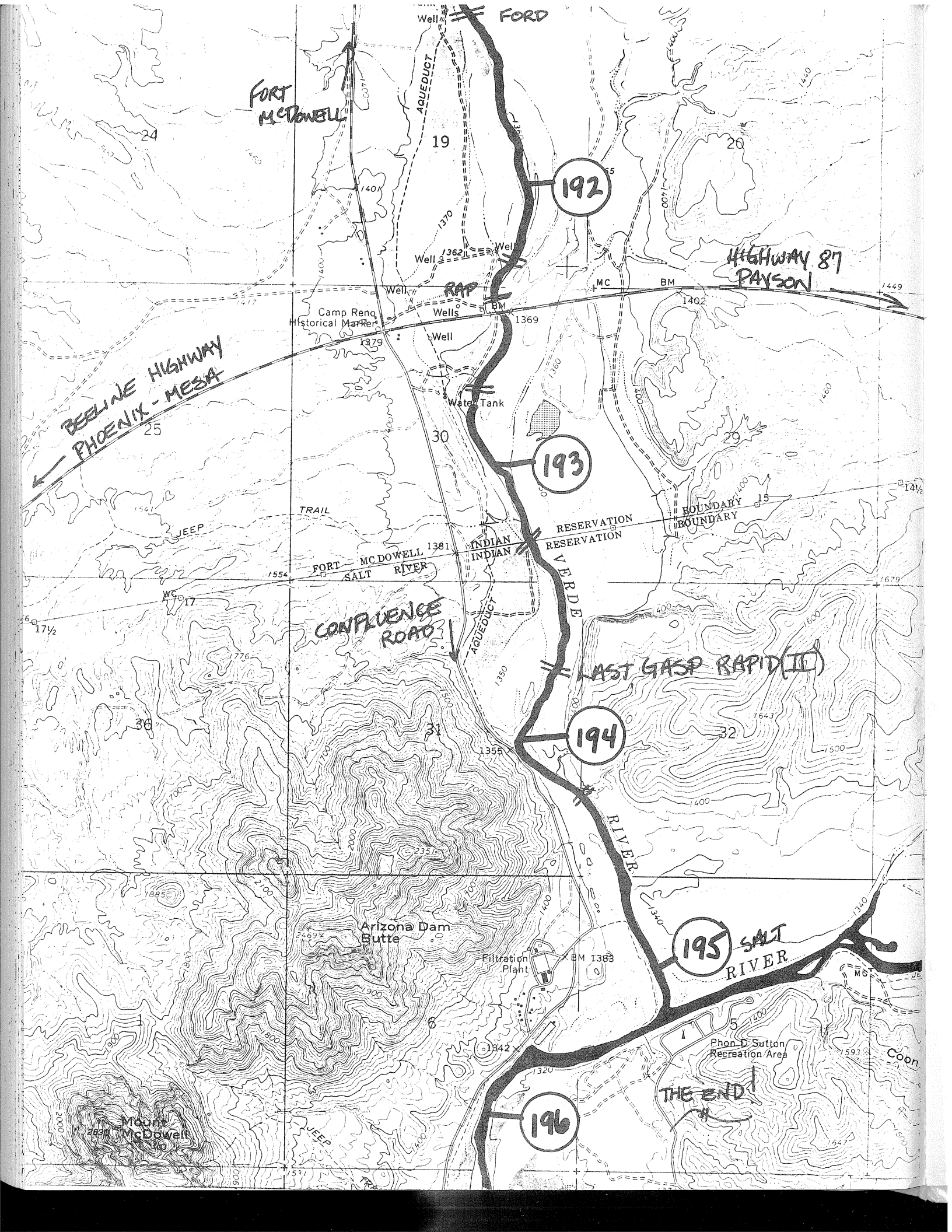
Mile 192.0 - Elevation 1,360 - The gradient of the channel steepens a little as you near the RAP at M. 192.4. Try not to take out any duckies or tubers as you descend the rif.

Be careful paddling under the newly remodeled Beeline Bridge. It would really take some careless work to get

wrapped on a bridge support, but it can and does happen.



~ Mile 192.4 ~



FORT MCDOWELL

FORD

192

HIGHWAY 87
PAYSON

BEELINE HIGHWAY
PHOENIX - MESA

193

FORT MCDOWELL
SALT RIVER

RESERVATION
BOUNDARY

CONFLUENCE
ROAD

INDIAN
RESERVATION

LAST GASP RAPID (II)

194

195 SALT
RIVER

Arizona Dam
Butte

Filtration
Plant

Phon D. Sutton
Recreation Area

Coon

THE END

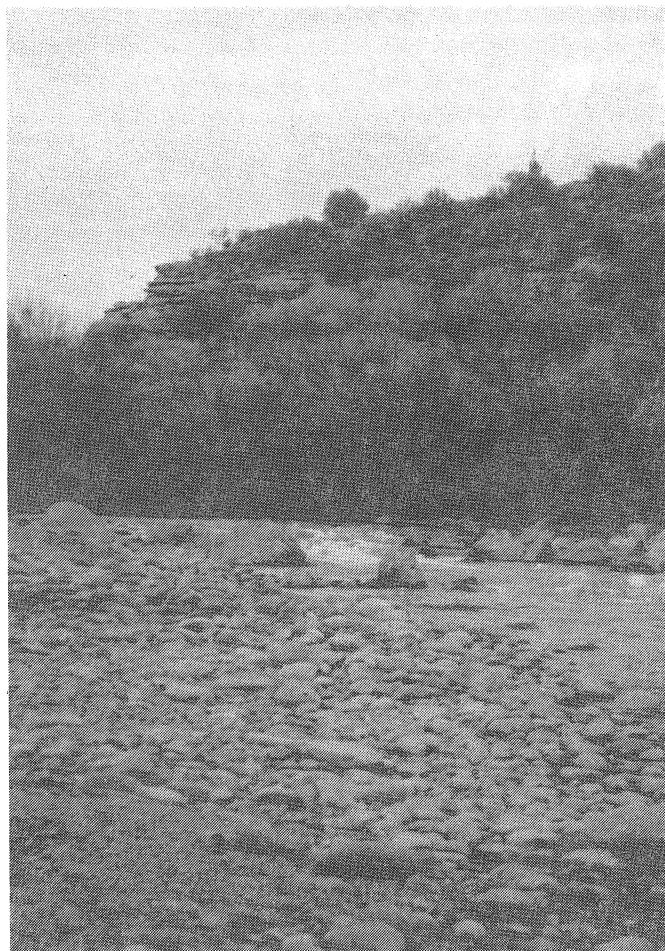
196

Mount
McDowell

Mile 192.4 - You are likely to see more people in the next three miles than you would anywhere else on the entire Verde. This stretch and the one on the nearby Salt River have played host to so many summer weekend recreationists in the past that maximum capacity limits, fees and other restrictions are now enforced by tribe and park officials. The only time I've paddled through here and had the river almost to myself was on a February weekend during a cold downpour. It really is a pretty finale when you can float in relative peace. In fact, if I lived in the Valley, I'd head out here frequently at quittin' time to relax and play in this "Last Gasp" stretch.

Mile 192.7 - A nice little riffle.

Mile 193.0 - Elevation 1,350 - At the boundary of the



~ Mile 193.6 ~



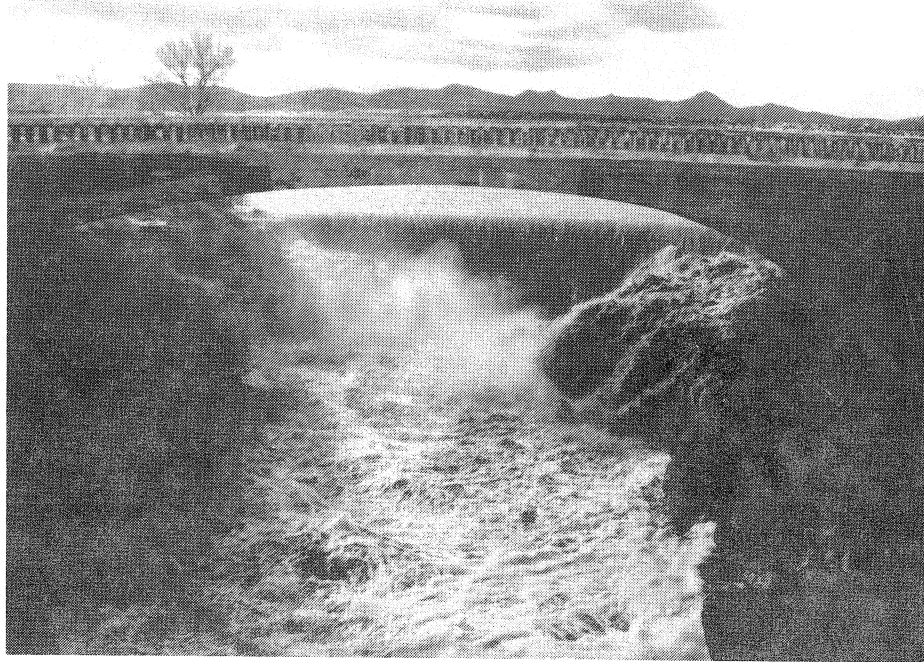
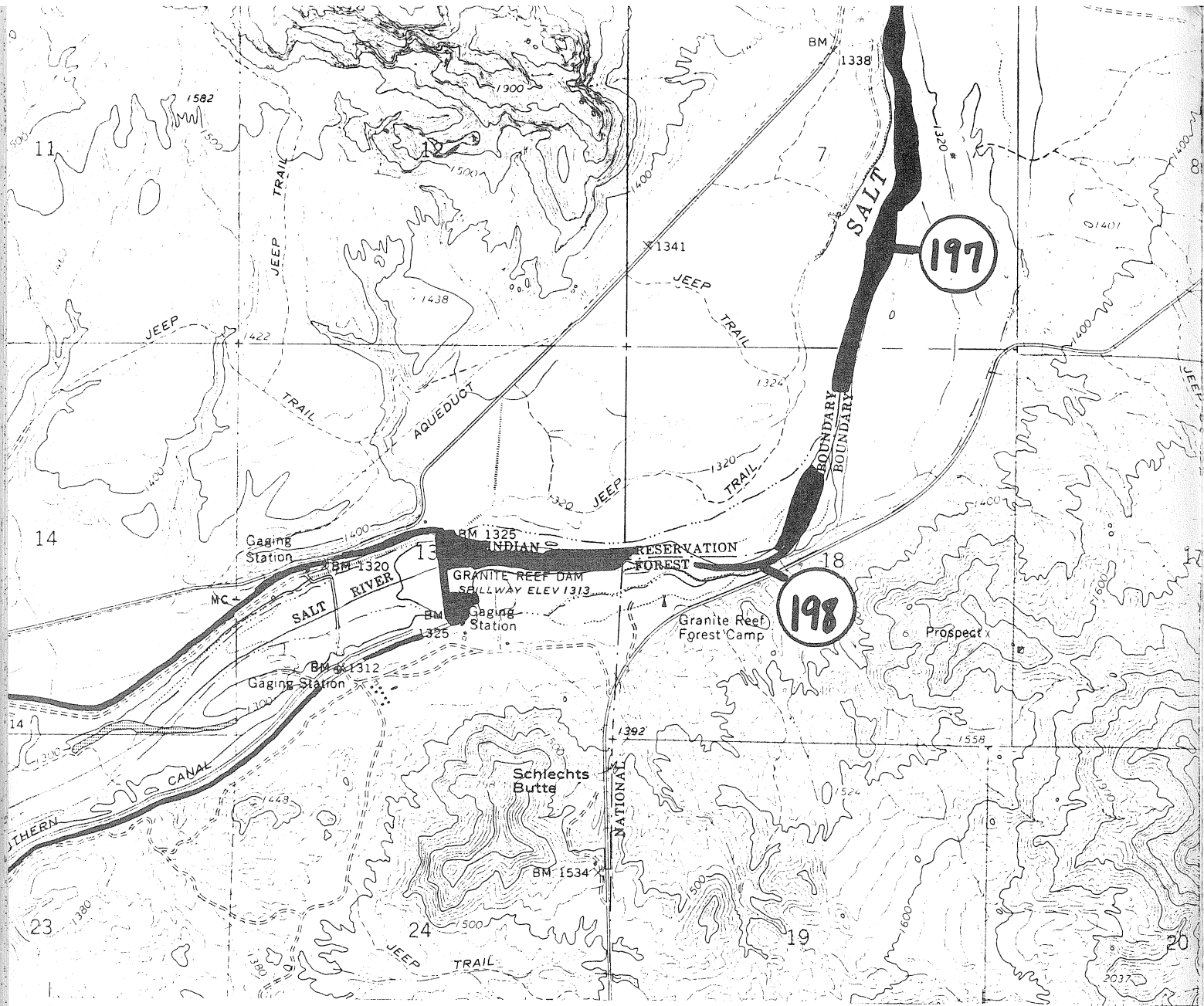
~ Mile 193.6 - "Last Gasp" Rapid - 250 cfs ~

Fort McDowell and Salt River Reservations, you'll encounter a small rock bar riffle. Coming up around the bend is "Last Gasp."

Mile 193.6 - This drop is not big stuff by upper Verde standards, but because it is such an obvious anomaly of this run, I felt it deserving of a name. "Last Gasp" came to me while I was sitting here waxing sentimental about the Verde's upcoming demise, and watching a cute little grebe put on a show of wave surfing and snorkeling in the haystacks. For these two contrasting reasons, "Last Gasp" stuck with me. This rapid is worth scouting. It is a fairly straightforward run, but it does possess good waves, some holes, and rocks near the top that could bugger your setup. Many beginners and tubers have swamped here, so consider lightening up or lining if you are at all intimidated by what you see.

"Last Gasp" is a great place to learn and practice your white water strokes. With the exception of a couple of possible riffles at M. 194.3 and M. 195.1, this is all the pop the Verde's got left, so why not run it twice or more and play a while.

Mile 194.0 - Elevation 1,340 - Here is a convenient RAP on the right below the majestic topography of Arizona Dam Butte. Somewhere in this confluence area, Orme Dam was considered for construction in the 1970's as a component of the Federal Central



~ The Beginning ~



~ Mile 195.2 - Looking upriver from the confluence ~

Arizona Project (CAP). It was proposed for the dual purposes of damming and storing more Verde/Salt watershed runoff (seven wasn't enough) and stockpiling CAP allotments from the Colorado River.

Orme was eliminated from the master plan in 1977 during the Carter Administration primarily for environmental reasons. It was another close call for the Verde similar to Cliff Dam up around Mile 154. Controversies continue to this day regarding water projects and policies, not to mention the politics of it all, but I truly think most people would now agree that the right decisions were made not to solely rely on more huge storage reservoirs to solve an arid region's problems. Long-term vision is tipping the scales favorably against short-term schemes.

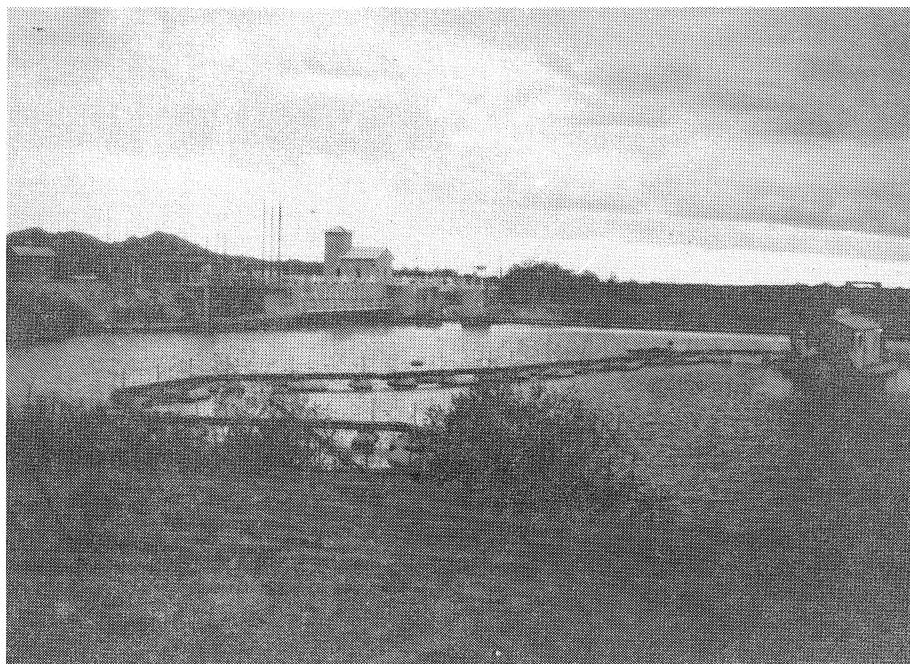
By the way, the Bureau of Reclamation (the big daddy of water tamers since 1902) declared in November of 1993 that it would no longer fund or promote any more Federal water storage or irrigation projects! A quote from the historic policy statement reads, "We have an organization and a culture for a mission that no longer exists." Amen!

Mile 195.2 - Elevation 1,330 - The End! The Verde unites with the Salt and forever on down loses her maiden name. Surrounded often by the spectacle of hoards of boombox beer-festers at the confluence, the Verde quietly acquiesces and ends her journey.

Mile 198.8 - Granite Reef Dam - The River's Headstone, the Salt River ends, too. During heavy runoff, the Salt may continue flowing over the spillways at Granite Reef, but normally all of her waters get diverted into the Southern and Arizona Canals leaving the ancestral bed virtually dry.

The spillway elevation of the 86-year-old Granite Reef Dam? 1,313 . . . 1,313? Hmmm!

FINAL NOTE: It's time to go back somewhere between Mile 1.0 and hereabouts to float again. I hope all of your Verde River adventures are safe and enjoyable. Go in Peace!



~ Mile 198.8 - Granite Reef Dam ~