



## **Chuck Brabec:**

**Webmaster 2004-2015;**

**Communications Chair 2008-2015**

**USA WW:** We know you started working on the website and sending out E-zines in August of 2004. How did you get involved with USA Wildwater?

**Chuck:** I volunteered to help Donnie Hudspeth run the team trials on the Top Gauley (above Summersville Lake) in April of 2004. After the race, Chris asked me if I would be interested in being the webmaster for USA Wildwater. (He knew that I had been webmaster for the Carolina Canoe Club before then as was currently doing the same job for the WV Wildwater Association. I got back with Chris a few days later and agreed to do the job. Part of the reason was that I liked the way the competitors supported each other.

**USA WW:** While you don't race wildwater, you do paddle whitewater. What are some of your favorite runs/what type of water do you enjoy?

**Chuck:** My wife, Nancy, and I got into whitewater paddling in the mid-1980s. We lived in Raleigh, NC and I was a Scoutmaster for the troop our son's were in. The troop started doing some easy whitewater on the Haw and Cape Fear rivers in the Raleigh area. One year I took our troop to summer camp at Camp Daniel Boone near Asheville, NC. They had a fleet of kayaks and taught the basics of kayaking. Our son, Daniel, fell in love with the sport. We joined the Carolina Canoe Club and started taking Daniel to some local rivers. Nancy and I had a Mad River Explorer at the time (mostly for fishing and lake paddling) so we paddled some of the same rivers with Daniel.

We paddled the canoe for one year and then moved on the kayaks. We became more and more active in the Carolina Canoe Club and became certified ACA Whitewater Kayak instructors in about 1990. We only taught as volunteers for CCC and WVWA. We let our certification lapse after about 16 years. During

that time we gradually worked our way up from class II-III to some class III-IV-V rivers and creeks. The most difficult rivers we paddled were probably the Lower New (gorge), Lower Gauley, Upper and Middle Meadow in WV, Section 4 of the Chattooga (at low water) and the Brown's Canyon section of the Arkansas in Colorado. Our son also led us down the Upper Gauley a couple times. We have also paddled in Costa Rica a few times.

As we aged, we started scaling back to mostly class II-III. One of the reasons that we moved to WV when we retired was to be closer to the river we came to love - especially the Cherry River and Top Gauley. We also head down to the Nantahala several times each year to paddle with friends. When I am paddling, still like to work on technique - catching eddies, making peel outs, ferrying, and surfing. I would much rather spend a few hours on a short section of a river than seeing how fast and far I can paddle.

**USA WW:** You have volunteered with several organizations over the last decade, not just USA Wildwater. American Whitewater and Friends of the Cherry River are two, but are there others? What has been your role with those other organizations?

**Chuck:** I have been a long time member of American Whitewater and the ACA (mostly as a certified instructor). As I mentioned earlier, I have been a member of the Carolina Canoe Club since the mid-to-late 1980s, served as Treasurer in 1991-1992 and as Webmaster from 2000-2009. I was also been active in the West Virginia Wildwater Association starting in shortly after we moved to WV in 1997. I was webmaster for WVWA from 2000 thru 2012 and assistant to the webmaster since then.

**USA WW:** How much time do you think you've spent on wildwater? We estimate over 3,000 hours...but this could be low.

The amount of time that I spent on wildwater really varied depending on the time of year, amount of news that I received and the amount of digging that I had to do to get information - especially for the calendar and race results for doing the rankings. I did it all because it was my way of contributing to the organization. I also had time to spare as I have been retired since 1997.

**USA WW:** What notable ways will you be spending your time that you would have used to work on [usawildwater.com](http://usawildwater.com)?

**Chuck:** I hope to spend more time traveling, enjoying the outdoors with my wonderful wife, helping her with our gardening and taking more vacations with our two sons, daughters-in-law and our granddaughters (Alexa and Haley). Both girls are into winter sports and soccer. They live in Steamboat Springs, Colorado and are very active in the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club. Alexa is 11 and she is focusing on the Nordic Combined events. She loves ski jumping. Haley is 8 and she likes to ski jump but also is branching out into the Alpine events. They both had a blast in the street events at the Steamboat Spring Winter Carnival earlier this month. Nancy and I went to Colorado to watch both girls compete in a regional soccer tournament. Last year was Haley's turn, the year before was Alexa's.