

such as Lewis and Clark or Maj. Wesley Powell first found them in the last century.

This opportunity to explore the canyons of these wild desert rivers in the Southwest is rapidly diminishing due to the numerous power dams and subsequent loss of water by evaporation. In spite of these problems for 17 years, Explorer Post 20, with an average membership of 30 boys, has managed to maintain this program on the remaining wild rivers of the Southwest. The young men who have participated in this type of expedition agree that river exploration trips are unexcelled for true adventure.

Consequently, this rewarding activity is continued each year with enthusiasm among the Explorer Scouts and staff for the unique excitement and beauty that can be found only along our wild and untamed rivers. In fact, we note that this sport is not limited exclusively to Explorer Scouts since Explorer Post 20 quietly followed Senator Kennedy down the Middle Fork of the Salmon during July of 1966. We read of his continuing white water adventures more recently on the Hudson River Gorge, this last May, including Secretary of the Interior Udall with their families.

This sport has become so popular during recent years that the State of Utah has required all commercial river boatmen and guides to take an extensive qualifying examination before taking passengers for hire. While not required on the nonprofessional Explorer Scout trips in Utah, I am proud to have passed this examination and personally rowed or paddled my own raft, canoe, or kayak down nearly 2,000 miles of Southwestern rivers, including leading Explorer Post members, during the past 17 years, 97,540 man-miles without any accidents.

The nearby Rio Grande, as pictured here, has always been of great value to Explorer Post 20's activities. This principal river down the middle of New Mexico is the training ground for all white water boatmen in New Mexico. Consequently, this great recreational resource provides the basis of our activities. To date we have 12,619 river man-miles logged on the Rio Grande and its chief tributary, the Rio Chama. We, therefore, want the Rio Grande, in northern New Mexico, protected and preserved in its present wilderness state. We believe the national scenic river system to be the best policy in the Nation's future interest to preserve specific portions of noteworthy rivers, including the Rio Grande.

I will skip parts of my statement here and move ahead in view of the brevity of time.

It should be noted that northern New Mexico is not the only place where the Rio Grande should be designated a wild and scenic river. Senator Yarborough, of Texas, provided an amendment to the Senate-passed wild rivers bill (S. 119) to include the Big Bend section of the Rio Grande, from Presidio to Langtry, Tex., as a river to be studied for possible future designation as a wild river. Part of this area is in Big Bend National Park. One can get some hint of the wild beauty of this region by looking at the 30-page article on Big Bend in the January 1968 issue of the National Geographic magazine (vol. 133, No. 1). This section was selected by Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson for a vacation trip by inflated rubber rafts in 1966. The canyons below the park have been scheduled for a national Sierra Club river trip in November 1968.