

## Exerpt from *Horizon Air Magazine* Article March 2003

I'm glad to know the river has good-quality water, because a lot of it is splashing me.

"C'mon, give me some juice," urges Eric, our guide from Glacier Raft Company, which runs trips on the Flathead spring through fall. We paddle vigorously for a few seconds, then stop at his command. Ahead looms a 30-foot-tall rock, forming an ominous backdrop to a rapid called Repeater.

"Those of you on the right are going to get spanked," Eric warns.

Carried on furious waves, our inflatable raft rushes toward the rock. I brace for collision. With just inches to spare, the swirls sweep us past to safety, but not before an enormous wave dashes off the rock and onto our boat. Yes, the right side of the boat has been spanked. Hard. The paddlers are drenched.

"Yeah!" We cheer and applaud, and respond enthusiastically as Eric barks his next order: "Let's go forward now. C'mon!"

The air temperature is 70 degrees on the iridescent Flathead, which is so clear, we can see more than 15 feet to the bottom. "The Flathead is a Wild and Scenic River," Eric notes. "It's unaltered by man. It's looked this way for thousands of years."

No wonder Universal Studios chose the Flathead for filming part of the 1994 Meryl Steep movie *The River Wild*. The studio hired Glacier Raft Company to provide technical expertise. Meryl experienced the same stretch of river over and over to achieve the perfect take. Our group gets to enjoy an eight-mile stretch. First we got the feel of paddling on four miles of calm water, and now we're in the middle of four miles of whitewater, with rapids called Bone Crusher, Screaming Right-Hand Turn, Toilet Bowl and Could Be Trouble.

This Class II section of the Class II to Class IV river provides just enough thrills to delight but not scare the three kids at the front of the boat. Their smiles are as wide as the waves we're riding. They turn to look back at Eric, waiting eagerly—with the rest of us—for his next "C'mon."