

BECOME A RACER IN 3 EASY STEPS

Watercraft

WORLD

January 2008

POWER SURGE

New Supercharged Performers Put to the Test

WORLD FINALS

- 32 COUNTRIES
- 50 WINNERS
- 1 WEEK IN HAVASU

SOLO ACT

RIDER LOGS RECORD
11,525 MILES!

YAMAHA
FX Super High Output

WAMILTONS UNVEILS NEW
FOUR-STROKE STAND-UP

FREERIDERS STORM
CALIFORNIA'S PISMO BEACH

\$3.99 US \$4.99 CAN



www.watercraftworld.com

"WE CAN UTILIZE PERSONAL WATERCRAFT TO COVER AN ENTIRE LAKE IN A DAY."

PHOTO COURTESY: THE WATERSHED INSTITUTE



>> The Watershed Institute's Frank Austenfeld (driving) and Chris Mammoliti do some assessment work on the Kansas River.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE BY JEFF HEMMEL

Personal watercraft come in handy for the Watershed Institute, an environmental assessment organization.

Frank Austenfeld is a big fan of personal watercraft, but not for the reasons you might expect. Austenfeld, an environmental attorney, is the executive director of the Watershed Institute, a non-profit organization that does lake and river assessments, reports the findings to government agencies and even implements the solutions. What the institute is most often looking at is erosion, a problem that is affecting the nation's reservoirs.

"It's erosion that is the issue at the forefront of every state right now," Austenfeld explained. "All of these federal reservoirs, these Corps of Engineers' reservoirs, are filling up with sediment. And they're filling up much faster than the designed life of these reservoirs. So there's a huge focus to identify what those issues are."

So where do PWC fit into the picture? Erosion often begins far up feeder rivers and tributaries, the result of development that eliminates sponge-like shoreline and turns benign runoff into a greater volume of water at accelerated velocity that can eat away at a shoreline. These feeder waters are often inaccessible by boat; PWC are another matter.

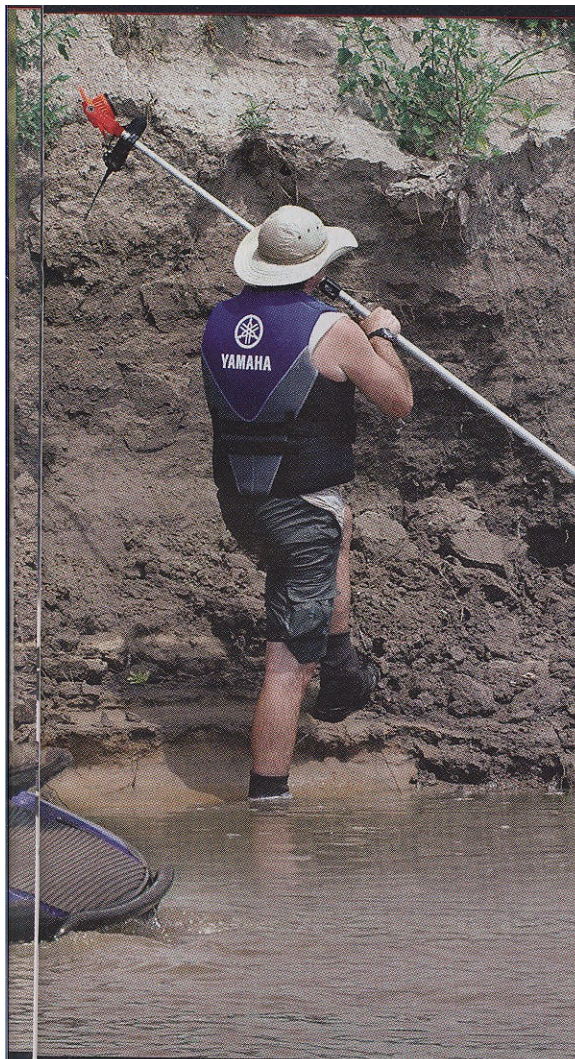
"We can utilize personal watercraft to cover an entire lake in a day, where with a boat it is much more difficult getting to areas where there are problems," Austenfeld said. "We can get in real shallow areas, and we can get way back up into the feeder rivers, creeks and tributaries."

PWC first caught the attention of the Watershed Institute during a project that involved the study of erosion at a beach that saw heavy PWC usage. Austenfeld

contacted Yamaha for help. The result was a multiyear deal for a pair of FX Cruiser High Output models. The partnership has proved invaluable to the group's continued efforts.

"We're in the process of doing a study on the Kansas River, which is a very wide river, moves fairly slow, and it's full of sandbars," Austenfeld added. "You can be going along in 9 feet of water and then immediately be in about 6 inches of water, and never know it. Well, about the only way you can make any kind of timely move up and down that river is on an airboat or a personal watercraft."

"The Corps of Engineers recognizes we have that capability, and are interested in having us do a study on different mitigation options," he continued. "We've already done one stabilization project



For more
flow> check out
www.watercraftworld.com

there, and because of the height of the river the only way we could do our survey at the time was on a personal watercraft."

But couldn't watercraft be perceived as part of the problem?

"Occasionally, and you could count them on one hand, a pure environmentalist might say that utilization of something like this is ecoterrorism," Austenfeld acknowledged. "They're the same people who would say that utilizing a bulldozer to move earth is wrong. They're tools of the trade that we have to use."

And as the Watershed Institute has discovered, PWC just may be the best tools for the job.

For more information on the Watershed Institute, log onto the organization's Web site at www.watershedinstitute.biz.