

# ALPACKA RAFT OWNER'S MANUAL

#thisispackrafting



**ALPACKA RAFT**

Whitewater Series



Sheri Tingey and her son Thor built the first Alpacka Raft by hand in their Chugiak, Alaska basement in October of 2000. Their goal was to create a lightweight backpackable raft that could withstand the rigours of the Alaskan wilderness, like the 600-mile traverse of the Brooks Range that Thor and four friends had completed that summer. From that very first raft, Alpacka Raft has been the industry standard for design and innovation, materials, quality, and Made in USA manufacturing. From everyone at our factory in Mancos, Colorado, thank you for choosing Alpacka Raft!

## **CONTENTS:**

This owner's manual and additional resources are available at [www.alpackaraft.com](http://www.alpackaraft.com).

# GNARWHAL FEATURES



## Features Description:

- **Bow** – Front of the packraft
- **Stern** – Rear of the packraft.
- **Grab Loops** – For attaching grab lines and securing gear to raft.
- **Valve** – Lightweight valve allows high pressure oral inflation and quick deflation with a quick twist of the valve core. Works with inflation bag and tempering by mouth or pump.
- **Cargo Fly** – Airtight Ti-Zip Superseal zipper allows internal gear storage. Keeps gear dry and improves weight distribution and stability. See P. 9.
- **3/4-Length Inflatable Seat** – Provides space for feet to position lower than seat and brace against WW Foot Brace. Also improves floor rigidity
- **Backband** – Lightweight adjustable foam backband attaches to D-Rings.
- **Double D-Rings** – Stainless 1-inch Made in USA for attaching backband and thigh straps
- **Thigh Straps** – Ultralight patent-pending adjustable 4-point straps provide unparalleled control for whitewater running including rolling.
- **WW Foot Brace** – Improves comfort and control when using thigh straps.

# ALPACKALYPSE FEATURES



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- **Bow** – Front of the packraft
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- **WW Foot Brace** – Improves comfort and control when using thigh straps.
- **WW Spray Deck** – Kayak style cockpit and spray skirt to stay dry.

# SAFETY WARNING

Packrafting can be dangerous and physically demanding. The user or purchaser of packrafts & accessory equipment should understand that participating in packrafting might involve serious injury or death. You are responsible for your own actions and decisions. The fabric used to manufacture our packrafts is selected with lightweight and packability being the most important factor. Lightweight raft fabric can easily be punctured and this risk must be a constant consideration during raft use. Individual paddlers assume all responsibility for keeping their boats from being punctured or damaged by any of the obstacles and dangers present on rivers, lakes and oceans. The individual paddler is responsible for deciding whether it is safe to float in or across a body of water or float down a river. The individual paddler is responsible for the safe and appropriate use of accessory equipment, and for not using it in situations that the individual cannot control the boat safely. Do not float in any water in which you are not prepared to swim. A punctured tube will result in an immediate immersion in the water and you must be prepared to deal with the resulting danger. Familiarize yourself with your boat's capabilities and limitations. Due to the wide variability of water conditions and obstacles, Alpacka Raft makes no claims as to Alpacka rafts suitability for or durability against specific bodies of water and physical obstacles.

The following safety standards are recognized by the National Paddling Sports Association, and we recommend all users of this product adhere to these standards:

- Get paddle sports instruction specific to this type of craft.
- Obtain certified first aid training and carry first aid and rescue/safety equipment.
- Always wear a nationally approved personal flotation device.
- Always wear a helmet where appropriate.
- Dress appropriately for weather conditions; cold water and/or cold weather can result in hypothermia.
- Check your equipment prior to each use for signs of wear or failure.
- Never paddle alone.
- Do not paddle in flood conditions.
- Be aware of appropriate river water levels, tidal changes, dangerous currents and weather changes.
- Scout unfamiliar waters; portage where appropriate.
- Do not exceed your paddling ability; be honest with yourself.
- Consult a physician prior to your paddle sports training.
- You must not use alcohol or mind altering drugs prior to using this product.
- Follow the manufacturer recommendations for use of this product.
- If additional outfitting is added to this craft, use manufacturer's approved materials only; do not impair entry or exit access.
- Read owners information package prior to using this product.

The user of this product acknowledges both an understanding and an assumption of the risk involved in paddle sports. Alpacka Raft, LLC has no way to screen the experience, judgment, or abilities of buyers. Therefore, we recommend that all users adhere rigorously to these safety guidelines.

# WHITEWATER SERIES BASIC SETUP (Including Self Bailer)

**Seat Installation** – All Whitewater Series models include a 3/4-length inflatable seat and Whitewater Foot Brace. The Alpackalypse Seats are 3-inches thick and the Gnarwhal Seats are either 5-inches (decked) or 7-inches (self bailer) thick. The seats are installed valve side up and held in place by a sleeve welded to the floor of the packraft. The Whitewater Foot Brace attaches to a red 1-inch webbing grab loop installed in the floor of the packraft towards the bow with the valve side up.

**Backband Installation** – All Whitewater Series models come standard with a backband. The Gnarwhal comes with a custom foam backband, which is installed by: (i) attaching the stabilizer straps to the strap plates in the stern and rethreading to the inner ladder locks on the back of the backband; and (ii) threading the main backband straps through the rear facing D-Rings from front to rear, then back through the aluminum common loop and the outer ladder locks on the back of the backband. Adjust the backband for fit and then tighten the stabilizer straps to hold in place. The Alpackalypse Backband is inflatable and does not include stabilizer straps. Installation to the D-Rings is the same as the Gnarwhal backband.

**Thigh Strap Installation** – All Whitewater Series models come standard with patent-pending 4-point adjustable thigh straps. The ankle and hip attachment points are each adjustable in length to tighten the strap and change the placement of the strap over the knee. The two top (C/D) attachment points are adjustable both in length and in placement depending on the boater's knee position. See the Thigh Strap and Backband Setup instructions in this manual for more details.

**NOTE – One of the most important considerations in using your packraft is the way it feels to you – how comfortably it fits and how easy it is to enter and exit. Do not overtighten your thigh straps and backband as it could impair your ability to exit the boat.**

**Inflating** – All Whitewater Series models feature a lightweight single valve allows high pressure oral inflation and quick deflation with a quick twist of the valve core. Turning the valve core to the right will open the valve for deflation and turning the core to the left will allow the one-way flap to engage for tempering. To inflate, insert the valve adapter on the inflation bag into the valve and twist to the right to lock in place. Use the inflation bag to capture air and compress it through the valve (see the inflation bag video on our website for more details). As the boat fills up, you may want to turn the valve core to the left (without disengaging the adapter) to close the one way flap which will allow you to get more air in with the inflation bag. When the boat is full, disconnect the valve adapter and proceed to tempering.

**Tempering** – Unlike a spring valve used in larger rafts, our valve is designed with a very light action 1-way flap to allow the boat to be orally tempered. **Note that the light action 1-way flap will not engage until you have orally added some pressure to the raft.** The amount of air pressure that you choose to use is personal, but we recommend approximately 1.2-2.0 psi which is the max that a normal person can orally add into the boat. Be careful not to exceed 2.0psi if you are using a pump. After tempering, screw on the valve cap to prevent any leakage while boating.

**NOTE – LEAVING YOUR ALPACKA RAFT IN THE SUN UNATTENDED CAN CAUSE THE AIR PRESSURE IN THE CHAMBER TO RAPIDLY RISE, WHICH CAN LEAD TO FAILURE OR PERMANENT DAMAGE. ALWAYS LET SOME AIR OUT YOUR BOAT AND SEATS BEFORE TAKING A BREAK FROM THE WATER IN THE SUN.**

**Deflating and Folding/Rolling**– To deflate, remove the valve cap and twist the valve core to the right. Once the packraft has been de-tempered with the valve you can open the Cargo Fly zipper to release the rest of the air. There is no right or wrong way to roll or fold your boat for transport. Do whatever fits best for your use and carrying method.

# WHITEWATER SERIES WHITEWATER DECKS SETUP



**Overview.** We offer both a fixed and removable Whitewater Deck on the Gnarwhal and the fixed deck on the Alpackalypse. The fixed version is our driest and warmest configuration and our recommendation for cold climates with significant whitewater and any paddler that wants to stay as dry and warm as possible. The Removable Whitewater Deck has the same cockpit as the fixed Whitewater Deck, but the entire deck can be removed with a water resistant zipper on the perimeter of the deck. The removable Whitewater Deck will let water into the cockpit in waves and whitewater, so the fixed deck is preferred in most applications. All Whitewater Decks are a three piece system that includes the deck, coaming, and spray skirt.

**Fitting the Coaming.** The Whitewater Deck coaming is a 98-inch long 1/4-inch I.D. PEX pipe with an aluminum joint for connecting the coaming after threading onto the cockpit rim. To attach the coaming, unzip the two water resistant zippers on the cockpit rim and thread the coaming into the sleeve from the end without the aluminum sleeve. You may have to push and pull the PEX to work it all the way around the cockpit rim. Join the PEX with the aluminum joint and close the zippers to lock the coaming in place. Due to shrinkage of the deck fabric, you may need to trim the coaming pole to fit after a few weeks of use. Trim the end without the aluminum joint about 1/2-inch at a time until the coaming fits snugly in the cockpit rim when zipped closed.

**Fitting the Spray Skirt.** The spray skirt should be worn over your paddling clothing and under your PFD. To attach the spray skirt, start at either the back or front and work the opposite direction. It may take a few rounds of practice to get used to fitting the last bit of the skirt over the cockpit rim. If it is still too tight, trim the coaming pole as described above.

**Care and Repair.** You can order replacement spray skirts and coaming poles directly from Alpacka Raft. You can also pick up replacement coaming at most hardware stores. If you damage your deck, it will need to be repaired or replaced at the factory.



# WHITEWATER SERIES BACKBAND AND THIGH STRAPS SETUP



All Whitewater Series models comes standard with a backband. The Gnarwhal version is shown at left. To install:

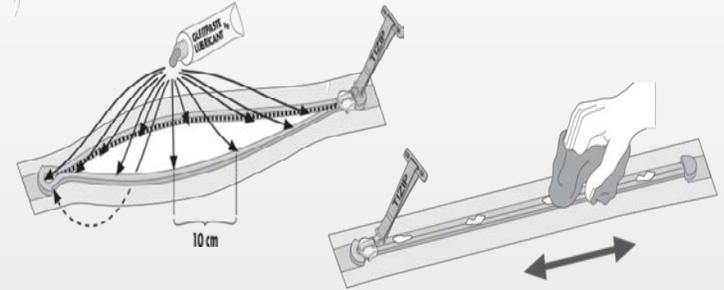
1. Detach the stabilizing straps from the backband, loop them through the strap plates in the stern, and reattach to the inner ladder locks on the backband.
2. Attach the backband by threading the straps on each end of the backband through the stern facing D-Rings on the packraft from the bow to stern and then thread through the aluminum common loops and attach to the outer ladder locks on the backband.
3. Sit in the packraft and adjust the backband length so that you have a deep knee bend to connect with the thigh straps. Use the stabilizing straps to hold the backband in place. You can adjust the backband while paddling to give a tighter or looser fit.
4. NOTE – The Alpackalypse Backband is inflatable and does not include stabilizer straps. After installing, inflate the backband firm while in use to provide better security and control when rolling.



All Whitewater Series models come standard with our patent-pending 4-point thigh straps. The 4-points provide better control and rolling performance than a 2 or 3 point thigh strap. In addition, our straps are adjustable at all 4 points to provide optimal fit and comfort. The straps are designed to be fit to a specific user by adjusting the length and placement of the top two attachments and the length of the ankle attachment. Once adjusted, the straps are tightened and loosened for use with just the hip attachment. You should only have to adjust the top and ankle attachments for the first time use or when you are changing users. To set the initial fit:

1. Sit in the inflated packraft with the backband adjusted to a comfortable leg position with your knee bent.
2. Drape the thigh strap in place over your knee and note the of the metal hooks on the strap plate on the top of each side tube with the straps wrapping slightly around your knee cap.
3. Attach the straps at all four points and adjust the length of the ankle strap so when the strap is tightened at the hip it lies flat over your thigh and knee. Once the top and ankle points are set, tighten and loosen the strap with hip adjustment which is threaded through the D-Ring facing towards the bow.

# CARGO FLY SETUP/CARE/MAINTENANCE



**Overview** - The Cargo Fly is the ultimate packraft gear storage solution. The three piece system utilizes an airtight and watertight zipper installed in the stern of the boat together with two gear storage dry bags which are clipped in place along the inside of the raft tubes. The system provides drier and more secure gear storage, improved paddling performance due to a lower center of gravity, quicker transitions from packrafting to hiking, and the internal dry bags act as additional balanced air chambers for increased safety (even over a two-chamber packraft) in the event of a puncture.

**Internal Dry Bags** - The Cargo Fly system includes two internal dry bags:

- **Ultralight Dry Bags** – Included standard on all Alpaca and Cargo Series models and optional on Whitewater Series models. Feature a standard roll-top style closure. Weight 9oz/pair.
- **Standard Dry Bags** – Included standard on all Whitewater Series models and optional on all others. Feature an airtight zipper closure and inflation tube to act as additional air chambers. Weight 18oz/pair.

**Installation** – Both ultralight and standard dry bags (except Forager) can be secured inside the side tubes with the included 3/4-inch quick release buckles. On initial setup, the male buckle will need to be threaded onto the 3/4-inch webbing tab installed about half way down the side of each tube.

**Packing** – Internal dry bags should be evenly weighted to balance the load on either side of the packraft. Heavier items can be packed towards the bow or stern depending on the paddler's preference.

**Note** – All hard and sharp items (pots, fuel canisters, stoves, etc.) should be packed in a padded case or wrapped in clothing and placed to the top and inside of the internal dry bags to prevent pinch flattening your packraft in shallow rivers.

**Care & Maintenance** - Follow these simple steps to keep your Cargo Fly TiZip SuperSeal® zipper in good repair:

- **Keep the zipper lubricated!** Lubricate the entire length of the zipper before the first use, before and after any multi-day trip, and anytime the zipper feels sticky or difficult to move. Clean excess lubricant off with a cloth.
- **Keep the zipper clean and free of dirt and sand in the field.** Load and unload your boat in the field in a clean area and keep your zipper closed when not in use. Clean sand and dirt contamination with a small brush and or by blowing on the area to prevent the zipper from separating.
- **Dry your zipper after every trip.** Allow your boat to dry with the zipper open after every trip. The coating on the zipper can degrade if stored damp, which will cause the zipper to leak.

# STORAGE/CARE/MAINTENANCE

**Alpacka rafts are low-fuss, low maintenance boats.** They're designed for people who are hard on gear. Part of our goal has been to build boats that don't need a lot of attention either on the river or off it. Your boat will endure a lot of abuse. Very little is needed to keep your boat in "fighting trim" from year to year. However, simple preventative care will *lengthen* its life and keep it beautiful.

- **Store your packraft out of direct sunlight.** We use the highest UV resistant urethane coatings available. These coatings will stay color fast far longer than cheaper packrafts that “look” like our boats, but use a much cheaper lower UV resistant coatings. Storing your packraft out of direct sunlight will prolong its life and reduce UV aging.
- **Wash your packraft.** Washing with mild dish soap helps keep your boat clean and prevent the spread of invasive species across waterways.
- **Air dry your packraft.** A wet packraft can spread invasive species. In addition, if your boat is stored wet, it will start to smell like cat urine and this smell can be very difficult to remove.
- **Clean, dry, and lubricate your Cargo Fly zipper.** See the Cargo Fly Care Instructions for more details.
- We recommend periodic **Seaworthiness Checks.** These should be done when pulling the boat out after a period of storage, after any non-design use (ex: using it as a tarp or gear-sled), or after any event that might have damaged the boat.
- **Do not use “UV-Protectant” or similar sprays on your packraft.** These sprays create a hard outer coating that prevents repair materials and glue from sticking to the packraft. If you do accidentally use a UV protectant spray on your boat, it will wear off after use but you will have trouble with repairs or gluing any attachments to the boat until it does wear off.
- **Long term storage.** Before long-term storage, wash the raft with fresh water. Get any sand, mud, and debris out of the floor area, where it tends to collect. Air-dry the raft, making sure it's totally dry before storing it away. Fold the raft loosely so air can circulate around it. The boat's fabric breathes and resists moisture build-up from condensation better when it's exposed to the surrounding air. Ideally, keep the boat in a cool, dry place.

# REPAIR GUIDE

**Always bring a repair kit and know how to use it.** - Almost all field repair is about knowing how the repair materials you have work and thinking through the repair that you need to perform. Most repair mistakes are made by not knowing the repair materials or rushing the repair. Be patient and use an extra pair of hands if available!

## **Common Repair Materials:**

- **Alcohol Wipes:** Used to clean and prep surfaces before repair.
- **Patch-N-Go:** A strong, easy, and effective repair tape. Great for most tube and floor repairs.
- **Tyvek® Tape:** The easiest field repair material on the market. Be sure to remove Tyvek® Tape repairs soon as the tape will bond to the boat fabric if left for long periods.
- **Tenacious Tape®:** A strong repair tape for the uncoated side of raft and spray-deck fabrics and pinholes on the packraft.
- **Gorilla Tape®:** For backing the inside of tube repairs and quick spray-deck repairs, or a temporary tube or floor repair.
- **Aquaseal®:** Aquaseal is an air-curing adhesive sealant. It's great for patching small holes, reinforcing stitches, sealing seams, and much more. Minimum 8-hour cure or 2-hours with Cotal accelerant.
- **Aquaseal® UV:** Instant curing version Aquaseal, but less durable.
- **Carmo PVC-PUR SEAL® Glue:** Great for valve repair as well as bonding fabrics together.
- **Urethane tube and floor fabric:** Patch fabric is included in your repair kit. These can be cut to shape and glued on with Carmo glue in the field for long lasting repairs.
- **Clifton 1-part** – This is not a field repair material, but is an ideal glue for performing home repairs and attaching additional tie downs to your packraft.

## **Pinholes and Small Tube (<1") Tears**

- Clean and dry the affected area.
- Effective repair materials are Tyvek Tape, Tenacious Tape, Patch-N-Go, Aquaseal UV, and Aquaseal
- Our preferred method is either (a) Aquaseal UV; or (b) Tyvek Tape to get you back on the water and a replace with Aquaseal overnight.

## **Medium (1"-3") Tube Tears**

- Clean and dry the affected area.
- Effective field repair materials are Tyvek Tape, Patch-N-Go, Aquaseal, or a full fabric patch with Carmo PVC-PUR
- Our preferred field method is either (a) Tyvek Tape to get you back on the water and a replace with Aquaseal overnight; or (b) Patch-N-Go.

## **Large (3+") Tube Tears**

- Clean and dry the affected area. Back with Tenacious or Gorilla tape.
- Effective field repair materials are Tyvek Tape, Patch-N-Go, Aquaseal, or a full fabric patch with Carmo PVC-PUR
- Our preferred field method is either (a) Tyvek Tape to get you back on the water and replace with a full patch when you get finished with your trip; (b) Patch-N-Go; or (c) a full fabric patch with Carmo PUR-PVC.

## **Floor Damage**

- Clean and dry the affected area.
- Effective field repair materials are Tyvek Tape, Patch-N-Go, Aquaseal, or a full fabric patch with Carmo PVC-PUR

## **Uncoated Fabrics (Seats and Dry Suits**

- Clean and dry the affected area.
- Effective field repair materials are Aquaseal, Tenacious Tape, and Aquaseal UV.

# LIMITED WARRANTY

## Limited Lifetime Warranty

Except as otherwise set forth herein, Alpaca Raft, LLC warrants its products to be free from manufacturing defects in materials and workmanship for the life of the product. This warranty only applies to the original owner and is not transferable. Original proof of purchase is required. Claims under this warranty must be made directly to Alpaca Raft, Box 1091, Mancos, CO 81328. The customer's sole and exclusive remedy under this limited warranty will be for Alpaca Raft, LLC to repair or replace the defective product, at Alpaca Raft, LLC's sole discretion. **Except as described herein, Alpaca Raft, LLC makes no other warranties, guaranties, or representations of any type (express or implied), and all warranties (including any implied warranties of reasonable care, merchantability, or fitness for a particular purpose) are hereby disclaimed.**

## Local law

This warranty statement gives the customer specific legal rights. The customer may also have other rights which vary from state to state (USA), from province to province (Canada), and from country to country elsewhere in the world. To the extent that this warranty statement is inconsistent with the local law, this warranty shall be deemed modified to be consistent with such law, under such local law, certain disclaimers and limitations of this warranty statement may apply to the customer.

## Limitations of Liability

To the extent allowed by applicable law, except for the obligations specifically set forth in this warranty statement, in no event shall Alpaca Raft, LLC or its third party suppliers be liable for direct, indirect, special, incidental, or consequential damages.

## Limitations of Warranty

This warranty does not apply to products that have been modified or altered, except for modifications specifically authorized in writing by the manufacturer and performed to the manufacturer's specifications.

This warranty does not apply to damage to the product caused by accident, improper care, abuse of the product, noncompliance with manufacturers specifications of usage or any other circumstances in which the product has been subjected to uses, forces or loads beyond its design.

This warranty does not apply when the hull number or production code has been deliberately altered, defaced or removed.

This warranty does not apply to normal wear and tear, including but not limited to wear and tear to seams, tubes, and floors. Wear and tear parts are subject to damage as a result of normal use, failure to maintain according to Alpaca Raft, LLC recommendations and/or usage in conditions or applications other than recommended.

Spray decks, seats, and all attachment points are covered by a 1-year warranty in materials and workmanship. These items are designed to be lightweight at the expense of durability and longevity under normal use.

Cargo Fly zippers are covered by a 2 year warranty. After 2 years, we charge a \$75 zipper replacement fee. Cargo Fly zippers require special care and maintenance. Failure to comply with the Cargo Fly zipper care instructions included with your boat will void this warranty.

This warranty shall not cover damages caused by the use of parts of different manufacturers.

This warranty shall not cover damages caused by the use of parts that are not compatible, suitable and/or authorized by Alpaca Raft for use with Alpaca Raft's products.

This warranty shall not cover damages resulting from commercial (rental) use.

# SERVICE AND SUPPORT

Whether you have questions about your boat, need assistance with a repair or warranty claim, or just want to share some pictures of your latest adventure, you can contact us for assistance at:

Alpacka Raft  
P.O. Box 1091  
192 S. Main Street  
Mancos, CO 81328

Phone: 970-533-7119

Email: [workshop@alpackaraft.com](mailto:workshop@alpackaraft.com)

For specific repair questions, you can contact our repair specialist (and paddling star) Ben at [benton@alpackaraft.com](mailto:benton@alpackaraft.com)

