

**Middle Fork American River  
Middle Fork Interbay to Ralston Afterbay  
Post-Run Group Discussion Questions**



**PLACER COUNTY WATER AGENCY  
Middle Fork American River Project Relicensing**

**Whitewater Boating Flow Study – POST-RUN GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Middle Fork American River (Middle Fork Interbay to Ralston Afterbay Reach)  
May 8, 2010**

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1. What would you rate the class of whitewater at this flow?  
Class 5 – difficulty of access; high consequences; instream wood; need to be on-line
2. Do you consider this a single-day or multi-day run?  
Single day run – length; no real good camping areas; portages with heavy boat a problem; would not go to this run for a camping experience, i.e., the Feather River
3. What type of boater would you expect to boat this reach?  
Class 5 expert boaters – “Sierra style”; wilderness run; not going to hike out, felt confined – closed canopy; multiple bear sightings, surprised by the degree of wilderness feeling; appeal to “creeking-boaters” as opposed to a “river-run”
4. What are the safety concerns on this run?  
Typical Class 5 considerations; lots of instream wood – more than typical; some metal; most of the wood was in easy rapids – Class 3; top 3 miles (steep) was clean; needs to be “cleaned-out; there are not specific locations or sections that are overtly dangerous or required running or blind running
5. How would you expect the safety concerns to change at a lower flow?  
Instream wood considerations would not change – rapids would become rocky; more boat damage; more potential for pinning; more dangerous
6. How would you expect the safety concerns to change at a higher flow?  
In channel and bank riparian growth would make it harder to catch eddies; more strainers
7. Are there specific locations you consider hazardous, beyond what would normally be encountered running a river of this difficulty? *[use map to locate]*  
Instream and bank-side wood
8. Are there specific locations that required extensive portaging? *[use map to locate]*  
No
9. Did you experience a change in flow during the run, and if so, how did that affect boating conditions? *[refer back to “upper” and “lower” section breaks]*  
No

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10. How would you expect boating conditions to change at a lower flow?  
The lower the flow, the less “fun” it would be - would not meet your boating experience needs; more difficult to navigate; lack of cushions to maneuver off of, i.e., “boofing”
11. How would you expect boating conditions to change at a higher flow?  
Bigger holes; moving faster and linked up; could get continuous in some sections
12. What is the minimum flow you would boat this run?  
400-425 cfs  
Would come back at this flow  
Optimal Flow – 450 at put-in/500-550 cfs at take-out
13. What are the main reasons that you think you could not boat this reach below the minimum flow you identified?  
Safety considerations and experiential requirements, boat damage; higher potential for injury
14. What is the maximum flow you would boat this run?  
600 cfs at the take-out
15. What are the main reasons that you think you could not boat this reach above the maximum flow you identified?  
Linking up; bank encroachment; instream wood; hydraulics; and speed of transit

**Middle Fork American River  
French Meadows Dam to Middle Fork Interbay  
Post-Run Group Discussion Questions**



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**Whitewater Boating Flow Study – POST-RUN GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Middle Fork American River (French Meadow Dam to Middle Fork Interbay Reach)**  
**May 22, 2010**

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**Note:** The flow study was terminated by the boating study team approximately 1.75 miles below the put-in due to slow downstream progress. It took the boating study team approximately three hours to run the first 1.75 miles of the reach. This was due to the extensive amount of scouting and portaging necessitated by the presence of instream wood. In addition, weather conditions were poor on the day of the study. It was snowing and temperatures were in the 20s and 30s. Due to the slow rate of progress down the river, the potential for an unplanned overnight in the canyon in severe weather conditions was very high. All members of the boating study team and their equipment were evacuated by helicopter back to the put-in.

PCWA provided the boating study team with the opportunity to helicopter over the remainder of the study reach in order to assess the channel/flow conditions for the entire run. All boating study team members evaluated the remainder of the run from the helicopter. The team members felt that their responses on the Single Flow Evaluation Form and in the post-run discussion were applicable for the entire run, based on the section of river paddled and the remainder of the reach assessed by helicopter. They noted that that the run “cleaned-up” about ½ mile upstream of the confluence with Duncan Creek.

1. What would you rate the class of whitewater at this flow?  
Class 5
2. Do you consider this a single-day or multi-day run?  
Multi-day run - based on the existing condition of the channel, with prevalent instream wood requiring extensive portaging
3. What type of boater would you expect to boat this reach?  
Class 5 - Expert – with low volume, steep “creeking” preference
4. What are the safety concerns on this run?  
Extensive amount of wood and steep portages
5. How would you expect the safety concerns to change at a lower flow?  
More exposed wood with more portages
6. How would you expect the safety concerns to change at a higher flow?  
They would not change

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7. Are there specific locations you consider hazardous, beyond what would normally be encountered running a river of this difficulty? [use map to locate]  
No locational considerations – instream wood is prevalent throughout the run
8. Are there specific locations that required extensive portaging? [use map to locate]  
No specific locations
9. Did you experience a change in flow during the run, and if so, how did that affect boating conditions? [refer back to “upper” and “lower” section breaks]  
N/A
10. How would you expect boating conditions to change at a lower flow?  
More contact with instream wood and more portaging
11. How would you expect boating conditions to change at a higher flow?  
Instream wood more dangerous; need to scout longer sections; and more risk of washing into trees
12. What is the minimum flow you would boat this run?  
200 cfs, at the put-in  
Optimal Flow – 250 cfs at put-in
13. What are the main reasons that you think you could not boat this reach below the minimum flow you identified?  
Instream wood and extensive portaging
14. What is the maximum flow you would boat this run?  
300-350 cfs at put-in – The Duncan Creek contribution, which is unknown at this time, is a big consideration. The 300-350 cfs is for the section between French Meadows Dam and Duncan Creek.
15. What are the main reasons that you think you could not boat this reach above the maximum flow you identified?  
Instream wood; speed of transit; need to scout longer sections; and more risk of washing into trees