

Floating the Feather River

Plumas National Forest



Branches of the Feather River are known for deep picturesque canyons, good fishing, and world class whitewater runs. Feather branches offer everything from slow summer tube floats to hair-raising class VI expert paddles.

The North Fork of the Feather River shares the canyon bottom with Highway 70, the Western Pacific Railroad, and a PG&E hydro-electric complex. Low flows during the summer and numerous large boulders preclude extended canoeing or raft floating. Rock Creek and Cresta Dams have controlled recreational releases June thru October. A schedule of the releases for each dam can be found at www.americanwhitewater.org.

The Middle Fork of the Feather River is one of the first rivers to be nationally designated a Wild and Scenic River. The river is divided into five zones. From near the headwaters to approximately 50.4 miles downstream is the Recreational River Zone. Below that a 6.1 mile stretch called the English Bar Scenic River Zone. Then 27.5 miles called the Upper Canyon Wild River Zone. Next a short 3.6 miles called Milsap Bar Scenic River Zone. Then the last and most difficult to navigate is the 5.4 mile Bald Rock Canyon Wild River Zone which ends near Lake Oroville.

The Wild Zones are in a deep canyon with numerous large boulders, narrow steep canyon walls, some near impassable waterfalls and very limited access. The 38 mile Wild Zone is a class V to V+ run broken by the short 3.6 mile Milsap Bar Scenic Zone that may be accessed by vehicle. Navigating the Wild River Zones is recommended for expert and experienced whitewater runners only. Be prepared for a wilderness adventure if attempting to navigate the Wild Zones.

The upper stretches of the Middle Fork in the English Bar Scenic and Recreation Zone are more gentle with easy access. Rafting and canoeing are feasible in the Zones, from Clio downstream to Quincy-La Porte road, in spring. By early July, flows are normally low enough so that inner tubes and air mattresses are the usual mode for short float trips.

Other floating opportunities available on the Plumas National Forest include rivers such as the West Branch of the Feather, Indian Creek, East Branch of the North Fork and Little North Fork Middle Feather River. Plumas National Forest Maps are available for \$6.00. A Middle Fork of the Feather Wild and Scenic River Map will be available for \$6.00 late summer 2006.

The Feather River, below Oroville, and the Sacramento River do provide opportunities for extended trips.

Remember, if you pack it in, pack it out. They are your rivers and streams, leave them as you found them.

All are Welcome

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