

Middle Big Silver Creek

Vitals

Locale: Harrison Lake, British Columbia

What It's Like: Very committing granite gorge with big rapids, marginal waterfalls and hard portages.

Class: V

Scouting/Portaging: Difficult.

Level: Visual.

Time: Full day trip.

When To Go: Late season/September or other times of low water.

Info From: Early September 2009 - this beta from a full scout of the section, not a descent.

Other Beta: None.

Description

There is ongoing construction of a run-of-river hydro project on this section of river (fall 2014). This will dewater the river and drastically change the season when it is runnable. There will be no recreational whitewater releases. The head pond is not supposed to have any impact on the popular Upper Big Silver run.

Level

The level on Big Silver is visual - look into the canyon to find out if it's good. It's a long drive from everywhere, so it can be a gamble when you go there as to what the flows will be. The upcoming hydro project will change the season, though a gauge may become available. The Middle is a low water run. From snowmelt, the middle run probably comes in when low water arrives in late August and September. - it will get too low at some point. Rain and unseasonable temperatures will obviously have a big effect here, and there might be a small window in the spring before levels begin to rise. There may be a correlation with the Stave, although the Nahatlatch is probably a better barometer as it and the Big Silver come from the same zone.

Directions

Go to Harrison Hot Springs and take the Harrison East FSR up the east side of Harrison Lake. The kilometers are well marked the whole way. When you reach Big Silver Creek, the Harrison East FSR will begin to head up the Big Silver Valley. The reference point for the Middle canyon is where the big bridge on the Harrison East FSR crosses from river left to river right at approximately km 47 (give or take). The put in is 1.7 km upstream from the bridge - there is a lot of ongoing construction and access will be fluid until the project is complete. The take out is 1.7 km downstream of the bridge at the site of the power house and construction camp.

River

The Middle Big Silver is a serious stretch of whitewater in a committing granite gorge. The easier half of the run is upstream of the bridge where it seems straightforward. Just below the bridge as the river bends left is the crux of the run. Get out here if you have to as it will be difficult or impossible downstream. Several class V rapids lead in to a very marginal waterfall that to my knowledge hasn't been run. The portage looks horrible, and you should scout the gorge before you commit to make sure you want to deal with this drop and the portage. More rapids lead to a triple falls. The first two also look marginal and haven't been run (again, as far as I know) - portage and run the last one. It's a short paddle to easy water and the bushwhack up to the clearing.

Keep in mind this river beta is from an extensive scout, not a descent. We deemed it was too much dealing to run just a few good rapids.

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