

Stawamus River

Vitals

Locale: Squamish, British Columbia

What It's Like: A short novelty run in Squamish that's fun when everything in the area is running high.

Class: III (V)

Scouting/Portaging: Easy - roadside.

Level: Online gauge: http://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/report/report_e.html?type=realTime&stn=08GA076 Stawamus River at highway 99.

Time: 10-30 minutes.

When To Go: All year after heavy rain.

Info From: March 2015.

Other Beta: None.

Description

The Stawamus River is a tiny creek that runs underneath the imposing Stawamus Chief just south of Squamish. Far from a classic, the Stawamus is a short section of boogie water with easy access that offers a fun option to get out paddling when things in the area are high or flooding. While most of this section is made up of fast, continuous class III rapids, there is a long class V rapid in the middle that is hard to find without unfortunately placed wood. There is undoubtedly more whitewater to explore upstream of what is described here!

The Stawamus is accessed along the Mamquam Forest Service Road which you find on the south end of Squamish underneath the Chief. A bridge over the Stawamus about 2 km from the highway is the take out. You can continue kayaking downstream a little further but it quickly becomes flat and choked with wood - if you do this just walk back up along the river. About 500 m up from the bridge is a large junction of logging roads - park here and walk behind the water treatment building to access the river. The large class V rapid is just upstream from this parking area - if it's not runnable (wood) or you don't want to run it just start wherever looks best behind the building. There is an extensive network of trails along the river.

The Stawamus has an Environment Canada online gauge. 2.40 m is a medium flow. Expect water levels to change quickly on this small creek. The lower section is runnable at high water, up until you decide you can't find a place to stop.

The easiest section of the Stawamus is from behind the water treatment building at the junction down to the bridge, or just below. Expect boogie water with no standout rapids that you can scout by walking along the river. If you're interested in the bigger class V rapid, walk up the gated road behind the building until you reach a small dam and the end of the road. A few easy rapids lead towards the big rapid. This rapid starts with a fantastic 10 foot boof. There are few eddies in this rapid, and if it's free of wood it's an exciting one to fire up. You can start at several points along this rapid if it's not good from the top.

March 16, 2015