

St. Leon Creek

Vitals

Locale: Nakusp, British Columbia

What It's Like: A steep, small creek with hectic boogie interspersed with some big, clean bedrock drops.

Class: V

Scouting/Portaging: Moderate. The big drops are walkable.

Level: Visual only at the take out bridge.

Time: 2-3 hours.

When To Go: Late June/early July in normal years.

Info From: July 2011.

Other Beta: Kayak Hot Dogs (<http://kayakhotdogs.blogspot.com/>) did the first descent of this river - there are several trip reports there.

Description

St. Leon Creek is a tiny drainage on the east shore of Upper Arrow Lake between Revelstoke and Nakusp that was first discovered just a few years ago. Small and manky looking at the take out bridge, this run has several miles of hectic boogie water studded with several big, high quality bedrock drops. While this run isn't really appropriate for class IV or maybe even IV+ boaters because of the limited eddies above, and the speed at which the big drops appear out of the boogie water, it is an excellent run with some standout big rapids not to be missed.

Levels on the St. Leon are visual only. There is a photo on the bottom of this page that references a medium-high water level. At this level the big rapids were well padded out with only 1 hole to really be worried about, and the boogie was fast and just slightly manky. Higher water would go just fine with cleaner, faster boogie and the development of some worrisome holes at the big rapids. Lower water would mean bigger hits and bad mank in the boogie. Expect this river to be in the good range in late June/early July in a normal snow year.

Take out access is at the highway 23 bridge over the river just before it pours into Upper Arrow Lake. This is found about 15 minutes south of the Galena Bay ferry (it's free, and you have to take it to get from Revelstoke to the river), which is in turn about 1 hour south of Revelstoke. The put in is found on the south logging road, which turns off highway 23 approximately 1 km south of the river. Follow the mainline of this logging road for a short distance until an obvious spur falls off and down to the left into a large clearcut. Park at the end of this spur, hike 100 m upstream and then go straight down to the water.

Depending on how far up the river you hiked, the first major rapid comes either immediately or very quickly. It's a triple drop - boof, boof, slide. Boogie rolls right out of the bottom of this one. Keep a sharp eye out for wood as if there is something bad in play it will come quickly and eddies are few. The second big rapid - a very tall slide - comes at a left bend with small eddies on the right to stop and scout. More of the same continues until the last major rapid. Starting with a narrow canyon that's often filled with wood necessitating a portage on a good trail on river right, the river then plunges over a super clean 25ish foot falls followed by some bedrock ledges. The spot to scout/portage is often marked with flagging tape - the canyon entrance is not immediately obvious. There is a good eddy to seal launch into just above the falls. Once the river turns back to boogie, it's just a few corners down to take out bridge.

Updated Aug 12, 2010