

## South Fork of Silver Creek

### Vitals

Locale: Near Placerville, California

What It's Like: California hype at its finest - high quality, super steep granite.

Class: IV-V

Scouting/Portaging: Easy to moderate.

Level: Visual at the put in or take out.

Time: 2-3 hours.

When To Go: Early summer – check Boof for flows: <http://www.boof.com>

Info From: June 2008.

Other Beta: Dreamflow: <http://www.dreamflows.com/guides/SilverCreek/SouthSilver/index.php>

### Description

The South Fork of Silver Creek, or just South Silver, is a one of the most well known whitewater rivers in California. While there are harder runs and runs that are more popular, it's still one that will never let you down with classic granite rapids one after the other the whole way down. It weighs in as one of the steeper runs around (anywhere?) but despite the 600 fpm statistic it is, aside from one mandatory portage around a boulder mess, runnable from start to finish without getting out of your boat.

South Silver will flow during the summer snowmelt season. Probably the best way to know when to go would be to keep tabs on the Boof forum as people might post about flows when it's running. The time of year depends on the amount of snow in the area - if you're in California to run the high Sierra rivers, it will run before most of those rivers start getting low enough. At low flows the river is fairly cruisy - it beefs up quickly to class V at high water.

Finding the South Silver is easy - you get in there by taking highway 50 that leaves Sacramento heading up towards Lake Tahoe. It's all uphill as you begin to ascend into the northern reaches of the Sierra Nevada mountains. Passing Placerville Pollock Pines, keep your eyes peeled for a turn north to Icehouse Reservoir. The turn is well marked, as is the route to the reservoir. The takeout is where the river dumps into the reservoir - you just follow the road around the north side of the reservoir and park where the road ends. For the length of the river the shuttle is quite long. Check Dreamflows or another resource for accurate directions to the put in.

From the put in parking lot it's a quick walk down to the water. It is solid boulder crap above here. Below is a long, low angle slide called Autobahn to warm up with. Some boulder rapids and a lot of bedrock eventually bring you to the steepest part of the run - the teacups, Skyscraper and Off Ramp - which is obvious from above. Scouting and portaging is relatively easy here. The Skyscraper/Off Ramp combo is huge. The rapid immediately below Off Ramp is the only recommended portage on the run.

After the portage the action continues with a character much like the rapids above the teacups and Skyscraper. The last major challenge on the river is called Plastic Surgery. It has a sticky hole in the lead in that's apparently quite bad at higher water. When the river finally turns back to terrible mank don't actually paddle all the way to the reservoir - it's easiest just to get out and walk back down to your car.

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