

Riviere St. Anne du Nord – 7 Chutes

Vitals

Locale: St. Ferreol Les Neiges, Quebec

What It's Like: Waterfalls and slides in a deep canyon.

Class: V pool-drop

Scouting/Portaging: Easy scouting - portaging is possible but tricky in a few spots.

Level: Visual at put in, reference to several nearby gauges.

Time: Varies with how much scouting you do, in addition to deciding who's going to go first.

When To Go: Summer or other times of relatively low water.

Info From: July 2007 at 17 cms.

Other Beta: None.

Description

The 7 Chutes of the St. Anne du Nord is one of the biggest runs you'll find around Quebec City - big waterfalls coupled with a deep gorge and tenuous access combine to make it a hucking classic that can be hard to get on. While much of the whitewater is relatively straightforward, for all intents and purposes it's a class V run - some of the waterfalls are quite big and getting out if you're over your head or hurt isn't easy, nor will it help the access situation.

It is critical to realize this section of river is in a park where all of the property is privately owned. Poaching access could lead to its permanent closure. Perhaps more importantly this is also the put in access point for a much more popular intermediate section so irresponsible behavior could ruin things for many more people than the few who will come to run the waterfalls. Post on the local Quebec City forum – Quebec Kayak (<http://www.quebeckayak.qc.ca>) - to get information about the current access situation. Posting in english is ok, you'll get an answer.

The gauge linked above might not be very accurate for determining how much flow is in the river. There is a dam at the start which may or may not be diverting water to a power plant, and the gauge is actually on the Montmorency River found west of the St. Anne du Nord. This report is based on when the Montmorency (<http://www.cehq.gouv.qc.ca/Suivihydro/graphique.asp?NoStation=051001>) was reading 17 cms and the Malbaie (<http://www.cehq.gouv.qc.ca/Suivihydro/graphique.asp?NoStation=051502>) was reading 23 cms - it was low.

Getting there is easy - find the Mont St. Anne ski area and head east along the main road (route 360). This goes to and through the town of St. Ferreol Les Neiges - you can't miss all of the signs for the 7 Chutes park. There is another park further downstream built around a completely unrunnable waterfall - don't mix them up by accident. There is an entrance fee for the park - it is much better than a fine for trespassing.

The park surrounding the gorge and the falls has an extensive network of trails and lookouts from which you can scout. The easiest access to the head of the canyon is at a parking lot mid-way up the big hill along the pipe for the generating station. The top parking lot accesses the dam, but as the first drop and dam combo are completely unrunnable with no way to the water it makes no sense to try and get in there.

Following the trail that leaves where you parked you will come to a low point where the water pipe is running over head inside a wooden covering. Underneath this structure is a small creek running towards the river. Bushwhack your way along the creek, and eventually you will come to a pool - cross the pool and climb the small rock face. Doing this gives access to the gorge next to the first runnable drop.

As mentioned before, the drop built in to the dam is huge and not runnable. There is a nice calm pool below it, which is the pool you start from. There's lots of room to paddle around for a warmup. The first drop is one of the biggest on the run and it's sweet. The next waterfall is a 20 foot slot drop that has a huge hole at higher levels. The third waterfall is marginal at low water and can be portaged with difficulty on the left.

After some boogie comes yet another waterfall. It is really fun and has a great boof - it's also the point in the canyon where the walls fall away and it's relatively easy to get out and walk around - the trail is adjacent to the river here if you want to bail after this drop.

Shortly after the boof falls you'll get to the main event of the run - a huge multi-tiered drop that pushes class V+. It starts with a manky slide that drops maybe 20-30 feet which dumps off a perfect 35-40 foot spout. A very short recovery pool leads into yet another junky slide. It's a stout grand finale. If you're looking for some excitement in the summer when a lot of other rivers are dry, head over to Quebec and try your hand at the 7 Chutes. Be careful out there!

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