

Pikes Peak River Runners

Lake Creek update May 2007 Middle Fork of the Salmon River (Idaho)



By Christina King

Photo Credits: Christina King & Anne Pierce

Trip Participants: Pete & Christina King, Jack Schneider & Wendy Rombold, Mark Chamberlain, Shelby Erickson, Bill Cooke, Leslie Tyson, Dave Wimmer, Keith Fuqua, Ralph Hoffman, Patti Meyer and Anne Pierce.



May 29, 2007, Tuesday, Fire Island (3.6 feet):

Our trip started with the usual cold nights but shifted to unusually warm daytime temps. We enjoyed the first of many hot spring soaks in Stanley at the Mountain Village Lodge. We fill out our River Shuttles paperwork and enjoyed a nice dinner at the lodge. Last stop at Stanley Baking company for our favorite warm granola for the road. Boundary Creek road conditions and log jam rumors swirled before we left Colorado. We rigged early the day before our launch after driving in on a bone-dry Boundary Creek road. Jack and Wendy witnessed a vehicle drive off the perfectly good Boundary Creek dirt road and stopped to help. A passing nurse in another vehicle took over and they were soon on the way to the

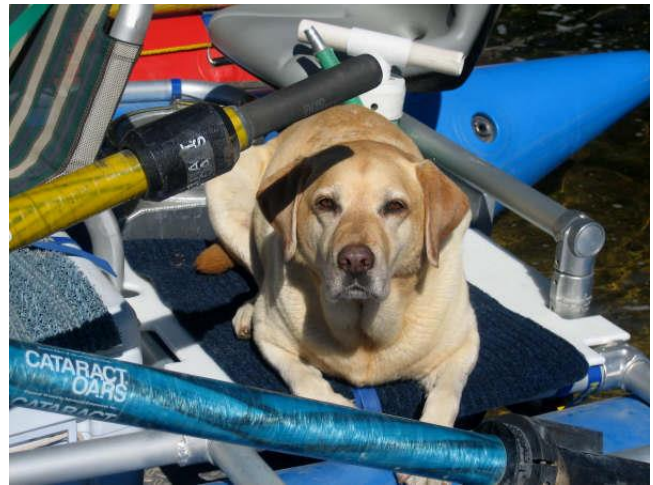


put-in. We camped on our trailer after rigging and loading the boats down the ramp. Bill "rides" his boat down the ramp.



The flow was moderate. Krista the ranger enjoyed visiting with us in camp and warned us about Lake Creek. Chigger and the rest of our group are ready to go boating.

We visit Dagger Falls the night before we launch for a last look. We launched about noon and quickly rowed down to Velvet Falls rapid where Pete and I had good runs. I got a bit close to the lip of the Velvet Falls drop but pulled back into the left eddy just in the nick of time. The rest of the group had a mix of good and extra exciting runs - many had a hard time recognizing the rapid in time and pulled hard to run left. Some ran the ledge hole. All ran it right side up. Trail Flat hot springs was a nice soak/stop for lunch while Anne captured a friendly snake for Patti. Patti got lodged in the Chutes for a bit and Keith had a shark bite his cataract blade in Powerhouse.





We camped at Fire Island and enjoyed a hike/soak up to Sheepsteater hot springs before dinner. Shelby bundles up for the cold night and swears he will sleep in his Carhart coveralls if he can fit into his sleeping bag with them on.



May 30, 2007, Wednesday, Marble Creek #2 (3.5 feet):

Pete's cat seat is frozen to his frame! Very cold night last night. Today is the big day to scout and run newly formed and changing Lake Creek Rapid. Several other river groups pull up behind us to scout. The Lake Creek rapid scout is very intimidating. Our group runs in two sub-groups with most of us running the lower left run, however, two in our group run the lower right. The river runs up against trees in the river and it looks difficult to get left. Turns out it is not hard to get left at the bottom at our river flow. Because this is a long rapid, it is difficult to capture the rapid in pictures. Lots of potential for problems and negative consequences to mistakes. My explanation above is relatively simplistic but consider this a must scout rapid as conditions WILL change in the future. The rapid itself is evolving with time. It is a long rapid and requires individual judgement before you run it.





We all run fine through Lake Creek rapid and slide through Pistol Creek rapid (no logs here) to enjoy our sunny lunch spot below. We enjoy a rib feast tonight at our Marble Creek camp.



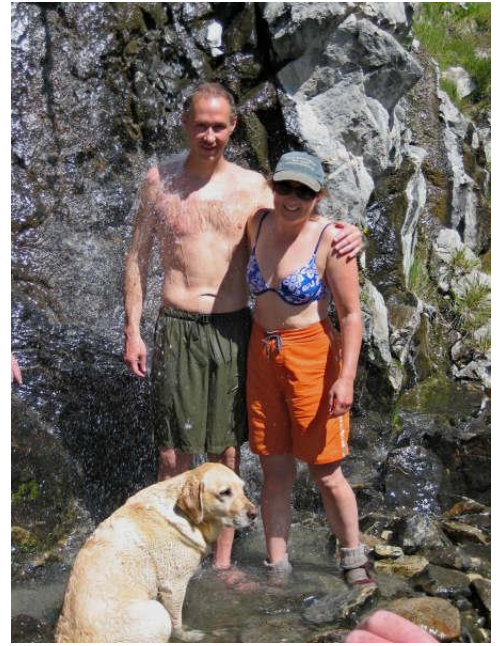
May 31, 2007, Thursday, Big Loon (3.5 feet):



Sunflower Flat hot springs is exceptionally hot. Big Loon is our hot springs camp. Air temperatures got up to 85°F today! We stop for the pictograph viewing at Cameron and check out Whitie Cox hot springs to look at the mites. We do not get

in Whitie Cox hot springs. Mark and Leslie carry their kayaks up to the Big Loon hot springs and boat down to the Middle Fork. Leslie says she

lost a good inch in height, lugging her kayak all the way up to the hot springs.



June 1, 2007, Friday, Wollard (3.5 feet):

The Hospital Bar hot springs pool is underwater, so we make it a short stop. Tappan is exciting and fun. Patti catches on the top rock on the left. Rest of us run further right.

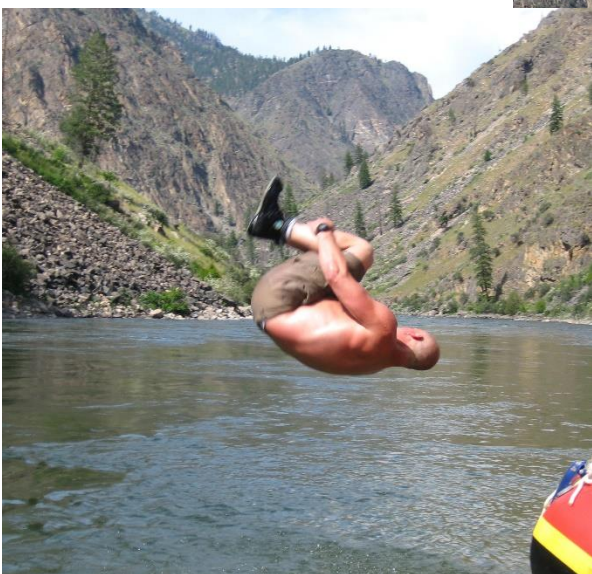


Ticks are out thick this trip. We enjoy lunch and Mark is ready to take a nap in the warm sun. We see lots of Big Horn sheep today (rams, ewes, and lambs). Haystack is a right side run again. We stop at Rattlesnake cave for more pictographs and enjoy another great dinner of pork tenderloin at Wollard camp.

June 2, 2007, Saturday, Otter Bar (3.5 feet):

River flows have remained constant at 3.5 feet for most of the trip. We see no otters today and Waterfall Creek is a moderate flow. We stop at Veil Cave and run Redside/Weber with no problems. Anne and I stop at Tombstone Rock and Stoddard Creek for more pictographs. Anne's motto is that if they are not photo documented, they do not exist.

Patti and Dave have a rematch of river horseshoes and Patti concedes to Dave. Dave must have practiced all winter after his defeat to Patti last year in the Grand. Everyone enjoys a cool swim in the nice eddy at camp and the diving competition from the back of Ralph's boat commences. I am certain Patti wins in this competition with Shelby a close second?! Anne is our designated snake vet of the trip and always manages to find the friendly reptiles (she does not pick up the venomous snakes).



June 3, 2007, Sunday, Takeout (3.5 feet):

Last day on the river, Rubber rapid is big, and Mark (the kayaker) swims the rapid. We leave camp early to ensure that Anne gets to Salt Lake in time to catch a flight home. The rest of the rapids are straightforward. The weather remains unseasonably hot! We cannot believe our good luck. Kramer (Derigger) is HUGE! Biggest rapid of the trip. We enjoy a lunch (and shower) at North Fork Cafe then drive on to Provo for the night. Home in Woodland Park on Monday, back to work on Tuesday. Seems hard to believe that the trip is already over.

