



## Cataracts of the Kern

by Rocky Contos (jcontos@ucsd.edu)

Date: 30 Sep 1995

**CAUTION!!** *Much of the whitewater described below is Class V, Class VI, or between class V and VI. The descriptions of various rapids have not been verified by other boaters. Differences of opinion may exist among expert boaters regarding the recommended "lines", the names of the various rapids, and other information contained in this material. Caution is in order whenever undertaking to run whitewater of the difficulty described in this material. Please refer to the [AWA Safety Code](#), particularly the description of Class V and Class VI whitewater in the Six Difficulty Classes.*

### Introduction

The "Cataracts of the Kern" section of Kern River is the~ 12 miles of river below the Democrat Dam down to the "Mouth of the Canyon," which is the start of the Rio Bravo run (now partially defunct). This section of river was previously illegal to boat on, and several people were arrested in the past 15 years or so for kayaking on it. The section has an average gradient of about 100 ft/mile and is extremely pool/drop. The canyon is very impressive, especially looking up into it from the San Joaquin valley below (I often ask, could such a large river come out of that?). Highway 178 parallels the river on the left for the extent of this section, making access and scouting of the major rapids easy by auto.

Recently, Sacramento-based WREC Environmental has been charged with the task of assessing the recreational opportunities on this section of the Kern. Included in this study is the determination of optimum flows for boating, rapid assessment, safety, and other boating-related issues.

The following is a description of the run with mileage markers provided by the project. Rapid names are either well established or given based on various local conditions, or are what I refer to them as (in quotes).

I have run 5-10 miles of the run on five different occasions. It would be possible to complete the run in one day, especially if you were familiar with it. Give yourself a full day if you're not familiar.

The upper 3.4 miles is known as the "Cadillacs Run" because several wrecked autos are observed by the river in the first couple miles (class V+).

The 4.5 miles from Toilet Bowl to Nude Beach is the "[Richbar Run](#)" (it passes by both Upper and Lower Richbar picnic areas - class IV+/V- with one portage).

The "[Cataracts](#)" is the 2.7 mile run from Nude Beach to the KR1 Powerhouse (class V+).

Finally the "[KR1 Run](#)" is the 2 miles from the KR1 Powerhouse down to the Mouth of the Canyon (class V+).

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## **Cadillacs Run**

### **Mile 0 DEMOCRAT DAM**

The river falls over this sloping concrete structure about 30 ft as water is backed up in the river for about 1 mile above to the Democrat take-out (for the class IV Miracle to Democrat run). Up to 417 cfs is diverted from the river here down to the KR1 powerhouse 12 miles downstream. A minimum fish flow of ~30 cfs is always released to the river. We portaged the dam on river right - of moderate difficulty.

It seems impossible to portage on the left. The dam does not look runnable, as rocks exist below it in many places and the small parts with pool are of very questionable depth.

### **Mile 0.0 "DAM BONEY RAPID" (V)**

This rapid lies just below the Democrat Dam. One can simply continue the portage of the dam through this rapid on the right (again of moderate difficulty). Much of the water spilling over the Democrat dam enters the river below this rapid making it a "boney" situation when the run has 1000-1500 cfs in it. The total drop in the rapid is about 15 ft, and it is littered with large rocks everywhere. Some of them have metal rebar sticking out of them, so be careful. When I ran it (1400 cfs on the run below), I fell off line at the top and went down part of it backwards, almost broaching. With more water this might be a nicer class V.

### **Mile 0.1-MAJOR OUTFLOW OF DEMOCRAT LAKE (III)**

The outflow comes from the left and is a very strong swirling current that boaters must cross to continue downstream. This current pushes boats to the right wall and either back upstream into a turbulent eddy, into the wall, or downstream as one wants. Go to the head of the outflow before starting your ferry, or you might not make it.

### **Mile 0.3 -MINOR OUTFLOW FROM DEMOCRAT LAKE (N/A)**

Here more water shoots into the river from the left, in this case through/over rocks and trees. Part of the water shoots up in an incredible rooster tail.

### **Mile 0.5-PUT-IN FOR THE PRIVILEGED.**

A paved road leads down to this spot from the highway, but it has a locked gate at it most of the time. During the study, we were privileged to have had access to this better put-in spot. One or two class II rapids are encountered before the next large one.

### **Mile 1.0-"UNOBSTRUCTED" (IV-)**

The river first turns 90 degrees to the right and immediately plunges down this rapid. Halfway down the rapid, it turns 90 degrees to the left. Scout on the right if you choose to do so. One can catch an eddy midway down on the right before it makes the left turn. There are no major obstructions in the rapid, and it is a fun ride. But keep an eye out for some of the larger waves/holes that occur at the bottom. It starts getting a bit low to run around 1000 cfs. There is a bunch of flat moving water to the next rapid.

### **Mile 2.0 SATURDAY SPRING RAPID (V+)**

One can take out on the left before any more action starts (and climb up to the road), or run the class II and III, then eddy out on the right. There are two spots to eddy out - the first is a boat-wide wedge that you can paddle downstream into. Just beyond this around a boulder is another one-kayak eddy. Once this far it is easiest to portage on the right, if you decide to do so. Scout on the right, climbing over boulders to get a glimpse of the rapid.

This rapid has several parts: first is the "Entrance" of which there were two routes at 1400 cfs. A large boulder in the middle of the river divides the current. Both channels are runnable, but a view of the left one is prevented by the midstream boulder. One can see what looks like a piton-rock at the base of the left channel. At lower flows (~1000 cfs) I ran this channel. It's best to stay to the left.

In my opinion, the "piton rock" that others pointed out seems sloping downstream and one would slide over it rather than nosing in. There are other rocks to dodge on that route.

At higher flows another route opens up to the right of the boulder. Both channels converge before the river pours into a hole (not sticky), then a short flowing pool (15-20 yds) before plunging into "the Crease". Here the river drops another 10 ft or so, which on the left is a double hole. On the right it pillows up 3-4 ft, then merges with the holes on the left with a strong outflow and a crease that is certain to swallow a kayak.

At 1400 I ran it into the pillow, coming out in the crease, but at 1000 cfs we opted to run it on the left. It is easy to flip in the turbulence of this rapid. Fortunately the crease flushes you out. But be prepared for

the "Eatery" another 10 yds downstream. This is a huge hole that can be skirted on the left. On the right, its outflow goes right into a large rock wall. I've been stuck in that hole twice - both times were lengthy rides. I escaped by muscling my way out to the left each time.

Several boaters opt to portage the Entrance and run the Crease and Eatery only. On my second run of the rapid, my skirt half-popped in the Entrance, and I rolled my water-filling boat just before going into the Crease. Luckily I managed to get a good line into the pillow. That buried my boat and filled it with more water. By the time I was at the Eatery, I went straight through the gut, actually sinking down and through the hole rather than it stopping me at all! I made it over to the side, still in my boat, afterwards.

### **Mile 2.3 "TRICKY" (IV+)**

After a section of flat water comes this rapid. There are two channels around a huge boulder for the first drop. The right channel is a squeeze box of kayak-width. I went down it once and won't do it again. The left is the preferred channel. Here the water makes a sharp right turn as it plunges down 5 ft in a tricky passage where the water pours right then left. One can catch an eddy on the left just above it. At 1400 cfs I've seen boats completely disappear in the hole here if taken straight. If taken aiming right, you'll slide and turn left on one rock, then hit another, but come out without plunging into the hole. At 1000 cfs this passage had barely enough water to float over. Just past here the river flows on the right side of a huge boulder down into what looks like a substantial reversal. At least up to 1500 cfs I wouldn't worry about it much - you can almost slide right over it.

### **Mile 2.5 "LONG ONE" (V-)**

Stop and scout on the left. This long rapid starts with a jump on river left of about 4 ft. Watch out for a submerged rock below this drop on the middle-right. I've hit slightly and seen other boaters do the same. I suggest running this on the left. After here, one can catch an eddy on the right just downstream, then go down the rest of the rapid. There are many rocks in this rapid. Stay with the flow and you should come out fine. Note at the very bottom the water boils up and then enters a very sticky hole. Try and go left or right of it.

Tom Diegel took a swim here on our first run at 1400 cfs. That hole just kept spinning him around and sucking him back in as he tried to roll. After he exited, his boat stayed in the hole a while longer. After it flushed out, I thought Dave had gotten it into the eddy. Unfortunately, he didn't, and the boat continued down through the next class V. I ran down after it and had to swim across the river and drag it back to shore.

### **Mile 2.7 "PILLOW FRIGHT" (V)**

Again scout on the left where you can climb up over the rock wall that almost overhangs above the rapid 25 ft. This is another long affair with what look like three frightening holes in it. None of them are that bad. The last part of the rapid has a lot of the river pouring into a giant pillow on the right (hole on the

left). From river level this looks frightening. I've always run the rapid on the left with the main flow. There's a turbulent eddy I catch on river left just before the last pillow drop. From this eddy peel-out and run straight into the pillow (with a slight left aim). The hole at the bottom is not very sticky. Rather you should worry about how the current pushes boats into the left rock wall after all the action. It's easy to lose control there and flip over. A route on the right is possible, but this flirts with nasty sieve potentials if you screw up.

### **Mile 2.9 "ROAD WALL" (V)**

Cowflat Creek enters on river left just before this rapid begins. A concrete road wall is another tell-tale sign that one is approaching this rapid. One scouts while walking along the base of the wall. One can start on several routes. I opt for the left. A drop in the middle of the rapid will back-ender or sink all boats at 1400 cfs (doesn't look like it will do that from the road scout). From there, head down the middle of the river for the rest of the way. I took a beating on one run of this rapid when I flipped going over a crease-type area near the bottom (I hit several rocks before rolling up). The last three rapids were fine at both 1000 cfs and 1300-1400 cfs.

### **Mile 3.2 "LEFT LEFT FALL" (V-)**

Here the river flows through boulder gardens and sieves in most areas. There is one runnable fall on the far-left. Total vertical drop is about 8 ft. One can paddle up almost to its brink before getting out to scout. The river slides down about a 70 degree slope, pillows up on the right, and slams into a boulder at the bottom before shooting all the water out to the left. It looks ugly and like a pitoning opportunity. I've run it thrice with no problem. I simply aim my boat left as I plunge down. The boat will probably sink substantially before being thrust out, possibly with a small back-ender. My buddy John Hanser thought I was looking to die on this rapid by running it at 1000 cfs. It's really not that bad.

### **Mile 3.4 "TOILET BOWL ENTRANCE" (IV)**

This is a long class IV with several eddies one can catch on the left. There's a few big holes in there - similar to White Maiden's Walkway. If you're thinking of running Toilet Bowl, catch an eddy by some trees on the right just as the river makes a right hand turn at the end of this entrance rapid. From this right eddy one can scout the big one, and if you decide not to run, you can ferry across to the other side and portage. Look out for the abundant poison oak on the river right when you're scouting Toilet Bowl.

### **Mile 3.5 TOILET BOWL (V+)**

A huge rapid where the river drops down rock-obstructed chutes. Most of the water pours on the left side of the river into two big holes (the last is most like a "toilet bowl"), the penultimate one backed-up by a rock on its right side. I haven't run this left side through the holes, but it looks possible. I opt for a route that starts in the center of the river, jumping the first drop (5 ft) to the right into a small eddy, which I didn't catch at 1400 cfs, but did at 1000 cfs. From there go down the rest of the rapid on lines that don't

look like pinning/broaching places. There are two that I can see, both still to the right of the center of the river. I had clean runs both times. This is a very impressive rapid. Look at it closely. Scouting from the left only, I thought a far-right route would work. But scouting from the right changed my mind about that. The water after the first couple drops on the right would easily push a boat down the final far-right chute, which is really nasty. This rapid is not run often (I've never seen it run by someone else), but I have heard that it was boogie-boarded by "Fast Eddie" this year (amazing!!!). I believe it, since I've seen video of him going over Upper Salmon Falls as well (another strong class V).

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## **Richbar Run**

The "Richbar Run" is named because it flows past two picnic areas: Upper Richbar and Lower Richbar. One often encounters several people at these spots (usually hispanic). The run is described in the Stanley/Holbek guidebook as a class IV/V run of about 4 miles. Perhaps the run sports some class Vs at high flows, but from what I've paddled it at (1000-1500 cfs) it seems only to be class IV+ (maybe one class V- in there). The run begins just below Toilet Bowl, the class V+ rapid where the river turns sharply right. Below here there are many good rapids. The mileage markers I've given are relative to Democrat Dam.

### **Mile 3.5 TOILET BOWL (V+)**

See "Cadillacs Run" (above) for description of this rapid. Below here is a pool, then a couple class IIs before the first good rapid.

### **Mile 3.9 FIN ROCK (IV+/V-)**

This rapid is named for a rock near the top which appears like a fin sticking out of the water. Boats maneuver to the left of it initially, then go to the right to take the final plunge into a large hole. Everyone I've seen goes through the hole with no problem.

### **Mile 4.2 ISLAND FALLS (IV)**

Many trees begin to appear in the river around here. It splits into two channels. The right channel stys up pretty high and then plunges down a nasty boulder choked falls (8-10 ft) before rejoining the left channel. The left channel is a more gradual descent, but still slightly challenging. At 1000 cfs, several in the group hit head-on into submerged rocks in this rapid. I'd advise scouting to avoid this possibility. At higher flows, it's just a really fun chute. After Island Falls the river passes through a couple more class IIIs before it reaches Lucas Creek.

### **Mile 4.7 LUCAS CREEK (III+)**

Here the river tumbles down another moderate class III rapid near the spot of Lucas Creek. Be on the alert after this rapid, as a class IV approaches.

### **Mile 4.9 LUCAS CREEK FALLS (VI)**

Again the river seems to divide into several channels, each with many trees lining the banks. The left channels have eddies that are easy to get out of and portage. The water going left flows through impassable trees/rocks down the falls. On the right, the river plunges down an unseen drop into a rock wall on the right. From there it turns sharply left and over the rest of the fall (about another 15 ft). The whole falls is boulder-choked. I've gotten out to scout on the right before, but it is an extremely difficult area to trot around. From downstream it appears that one could get on a slightly flat area to observe the rapid, but I didn't have the time or patience to get over there. It is probably possible. The rapid does actually look runnable from below. I know of one run by Phil Martin many years ago. Though he made it through OK, he will never do it again. He says the pinning opportunities are numerous and his boat bobbed across many boulder on the way down.

### **Mile 5.2 ENDER SPOT (II)**

After a class III+ where the river goes right next to the road, the river turns left and out of view from the cars on the road. It then passes down this small rapid, which is a great play-spot. An underwater rock to the right of center is responsible for this ender spot. The water pours to the left of it down about 2 ft in a nice, clean, deep side hole. It is nothing that will catch or screw up a boat coming down, but if one paddles up into it at a slightly left angle (which takes a bit of skill to accomplish), the ability to ender is easy. This play spot was there from at least 1000-1500 cfs. When one gets pushed out of it and flips, it is not very difficult to get back to it, as there are large eddies on both the right and left below it. I find it very easy to do half-pirouettes here (rotating right), but also have done back-enders and seen cartwheels. One could spend a couple hours playing in this one spot, it's so nice.

### **Mile 5.2-7.4**

In this stretch there are about 10 distinct class II+/III rapids. It is a great stretch for the intermediate boater. The last one is a bit intimidating since it can't be boat-scouted thoroughly until well into it. There are several great waves to catch in here. One of them is at the top of a class III- rapid, but is ohhh so nice!!!

### **Mile 5.6 DODDERY CREEK (III-)**

### **Mile 6.0 UPPER RICHBAR (III-)**

The river passes by the Upper Richbar picnic area on the left. There are two channels. On the four occasions I've paddled this rapid, I've always gone to the right with the most water. It is a fun fast class III. Watch out at the bottom for a couple of overhanging trees. The small seemingly play hole at the

bottom is not that great. The Upper Richbar outhouse is passed just after going through this rapid.

## **Mile 7.0 LOWER RICHBAR (II)**

There are a couple class IIIs between the two Richbar picnic areas, and a lot of flat beautiful water. The lower picnic area has a cool little play spot on the right where one can practice side-surfing and 360s (it's a very shallow benign hole in a very flat section of river).

## **Mile 7.5 NUDE BEACH RAPID (III+)**

Just before the end of this run comes a fun rapid. As mentioned before, one can't see this rapid by boat-scouting from the top. One must go into it before seeing that it is a very gradual decline and an easy rapid. Just below here, one goes through a class II and the observes Nude Beach on the left.

## **Mile 7.6 NUDE BEACH**

Here there is a small roadside turnout. Painted on one of the rocks near the road is "NUDE BEACH". Lately, someone also taped up a paper sign informing the public that "nude sun-bathers may be encountered at this beach". I haven't seen nude bathers, but it does seem like a nice spot to do it. This ends the easy class IV stretch that many boaters will be interested in. Below here is the "[Cataracts](#)" run (class V+).

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### Introduction

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Recently, Sacramento-based WREC Environmental has been charged with the task of assessing the recreational opportunities on this section of the Kern. Included in this study is the determination of optimum flows for boating, rapid assessment, safety, and other boating-related issues.

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The 4.5 miles from Toilet Bowl to Nude Beach is the "[Richbar Run](#)" (it passes by both Upper and Lower Richbar picnic areas - class IV+/V- with one portage).

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## Cataracts Run

Here the river tumbles down several class V/V+ rapids that are very challenging. Even at 1000 cfs, this section is still at a good flow to boat. Perhaps above 2000 cfs it would get a bit pushy. Almost all the rapids can be scouted from the road on river-left. I've done the run twice. First with Richard Penny, Phil Martin, Keith Beck, Bill Britton, and Peter Greene. The second time I intended to take Bill and John Hanser on the entire run, but they had difficulties and pulled out at Nude Beach. I was left to solo this reach. Still I had no problems. I think this is a fine class V test and one that has some spectacular and photogenic drops in it. It shouldn't be passed by the late summer/fall class V boater.

### Mile 7.6 NUDE BEACH

The put-in for this fantastic stretch. You'll know your there because you are about 3.3 miles above the KR1 powerhouse and at this particular turnout the name "Nude Beach" is painted on one of the rocks.

### Mile 7.7 "TWO HOLES" (IV+)

Just below the put-in the action starts. One negotiates from river left to the right and through two holes that are impressive >1400 cfs, but aren't much of stoppers at 1000 cfs.

### Mile 7.8 "MORE OF THE START" (V-)

Another drop that is unseen from boat level. The river plunges down about 7-8 ft here. On the left it is a more gradual drop. On the right it is a sheer vertical. My first run of this I caught an eddy on the right just above it and got out to video. I couldn't really see the rapid, which made for poor video. Everyone in the group ran it on the left. I relied on Richard Penny's hand signals, which told me that the right side was alright, so I went over with a slight left angle. I landed almost flat as intended. The second time I ran the rapid on the left and it was just a fast fun drop through some splashy holes.

### Mile 7.9 BOLT ROUTE (V)

This rapid cannot be boat scouted. Bolts in some of the boulders of the rapid give it its name. Scout on the left. All but two of our party of 6 ran this rapid. It is an ugly fall (total drop about 10 ft) where the water forms a crease in the middle. On the right, it slides over a sloping rock into a small foamy-white pool, then back into the crease or to me right over another 3 ft drop. I opted to avoid any unseen rocks in the crease and aimed right in a boof move into the foamy pool. I thought whatever happened from there didn't matter, since the crease flushed out and there were no major obstructions. However, I had hoped I could jump far enough into that pool that I would get over to the last right chute. I went for it, having a soft landing, but was sucked backward into the crease for the rest of the way. The second time I ran it (solo), I thought I'd try to get there using a bit more speed and right approach - it didn't happen. I was sucked backward into the crease again. Bill Britton's tried a run down the crease and found out there were no rocks in there. However, near the bottom he was back ended and somehow hit his head and arm on a rock which he didn't enjoy.

### **Mile 8.0 "PRE-CLEAVAGE" (V-)**

This is another steep (7-8 ft) drop that can be run on the left or as more of a boof-move on the right. One sees the mist from the hole floating up into the air. The second time I ran it, I thought it was Cleavage. But I was confused by the fact that I didn't see the exposed boof-boulder. It seemed partially submerged. Well, this is not it. It is also a good rapid that can be run on several routes. Scout from the left (I scouted from the right the second time and it was difficult to get out and over the boulders).

### **Mile 8.1 CLEAVAGE (V)**

Named because of two boulders that stick out of the water appearing as woman's breasts at certain water levels. This rapid has a very tricky class III, then IV entrance, before plunging over the final class V drop (a steep 8 ft). The final drop is pretty clean and the boulder that causes it is exposed to the left of the majority of the water and slightly sloping. The way to run it is not to get too far on the exposed boulder. Stay with the water, but to the left. The landing will be soft and flat, and you'll miss the turbulent eddy/log/rock on the left just below that could cause problems. Several of us went for air on the boulder. I went for way too much my first run and slowed down so much that I nosed in going down. Luckily I didn't pin in. The second time I went with the water, and had a beautiful fun run.

### **Mile 8.4 RANCHERO CREEK (IV/III)**

Just above this creek is a class IV rapid, then a class III rapid. Be on the alert, since the Triple Falls section is approaching quickly.

### **Mile 8.6 TRIPLE FALLS ENTRANCE (V)**

One knows when they're approaching this section of river since it goes out of view and splits into two channels around trees. If you intend on portaging the entire Triple Falls section, it's best to follow Phil

Martin's lead and go to the right. Take out where comfortable and walk the entire section (fairly easy since a fire has charred out all the poison oak and left a visible easy portage route). It can also be done on the left up on the road, but walking there is not fun and probably scarier than running the falls.

This rapid has two channels: right and left. The left is preferred. One can scout this from the roadside turnout for Triple Falls. It is very difficult/impossible to scout it from river level getting out on the left at it's head. It consists of several steep drops and is rather long. Near the end some water (enough for a boat) pours left through a cave with a log strainer in it - you can see this on the scout from the road. Straight down is another drop onto rocks, and to the right at the end, a significant amount of water pours over a 6 ft drop. This right chute at the end is the intended route and is fun. When I ran this solo, I stopped just above this chute and looked around for a while (1000 cfs). It did seem possible to go down the cave, but this was unlikely unless you really tried for it. Maybe at higher flows there'd be more water pushing you over there. Just past the final 6 ft drop is a very short pool before Triple Falls 0. The river right channel in this rapid can be done (I did it my first run since I was following Phil Martin and was too far into it to get back over to the left). It starts with a tricky boof in the middle and aiming to the left. From there one tries to get farther left down a semi-clean line the rest of the way. This channel is a rock-jumble that Richard Penny commented as not seeing any line through. I made the boof, but didn't make the left line after that, and ended up flipping. Luckily I rolled up at the bottom a little before flushing over Triple Falls 0.

### **Mile 8.7 TRIPLE FALLS (V+/VI)**

Most boaters would consider this a class VI. There are four distinct drops in it: 0, 1, 2, and 3. The steepness of each drop descends in this order: 2 (15 ft), 3 (14 ft), 1 (10 ft), 0 (6 ft).

Certainly the most challenging and dangerous of the four is Triple Falls 1 (TF1). First one must get through the class V- TF0 on the left, which is a continuous rapid up to the lip of TF1. At TF1 the river is divided into two channels. On the left the drop comes all in one gulp - and into a killer class VI boxed-in hole!! I might consider running it at low (<500 cfs) water levels with someone just above it with a line to pull me out when I back-ender and get stuck in it!! Not any-time else!! The boulders just below constrict the river even further making escape almost impossible. On the right, the river goes down a more gradual drop. Scouting from river-left, I couldn't see if there was a reversal there just as bad as on the left. But when I scouted from just above it, I saw there wasn't. It all pretty much flushed. Besides the hole, there are possible pitoning places in the main fall, and then at the bottom the water all goes straight into a boulder. It seems you'd have to go right to get around it, but aiming the boat left when going over the drop would really risk pitoning. Next time with someone there I'll run this, but as of yet I haven't. Portage this (and the rest of the falls) easily on the right. There is a substantial pool before the next drop: TF2.

In TF2, most of the water pours over on the right into an ugly hole that may have rocks in it (I'm not sure). The water hits the right wall, then pillows up and curls around there before going down the final plunge. In the middle, there is much less water pouring over, and a bit more over on the far left (this all

at 1000 cfs). The far left chute has a rock mid-way down that slides the water off into the pool below at an angle, making a flat landing possible. The two times I've run this I did it on the left, and both time I didn't even get my face wet, since the landings were so flat and soft. Just below here a lot of water moves to the left and doesn't appear to exit anywhere observable. Several of us believe there is an underwater passage where this water funnels down and out, though we don't know for sure.

After TF2, one stays near the left and lines up for TF3. I've taken this both times on the left - either down with the main water, or slightly to the right of it. It is a really steep drop and pitoning is a distinct possibility. I go over at an angle to prevent this. There are rocks at the bottom that will slope your boat flat and out in several spots (don't blame me if you piton though). This drop also seems quite possible on the right with the main water flow. There it slides over a sloping drop and into a big hole. It seems you'd go right through the hole, but I haven't tried yet. Below here is another pool, then a class IV, before the next strong class V.

### **Mile 9.4 THE PLANK (V/V+)**

There is a class III approach before the real juicy material begins. On river right near the top is what this rapid is named for: a boulder that just downstream about 20 ft and is only 4 ft wide.

To either side of this "plank" one would fall off about 5 ft. Most of the water pours into a mean hole to the left of the "plank", and falling off on this side could spell curtains. Peter didn't run over the plank and went with the main flow into this hole. All that I saw from above was a boat getting cart wheeled backward a couple times. He swam. Not a good thing to do, since the rest of the class V continues on for another 200 yds or so. He ended up in the middle of the river on some boulders, and it took some rope-work (which eventually got stuck and is still there), jumping, swimming, and general fear before he was over to the side safely. His pirouette continued down for another half mile and sustained a huge break in the front left part (I mean a really bad tear through the whole plastic). Hopefully it will be replaced by Perception.

The second day this was run Richard took a swim - no major casualties. It's a really tough spot. Stay on the plank to the end and you'll fall off past it all. Fall to the left and you're in real trouble. Fall to the right and it's not so bad, unless you do it near it's head. There it looks really ugly, with water pouring under a boulder and flushing out on the right of the plank. Past the plank the rapid continues for some time. There are two eddies on the right with really strong counter-currents a little way's down. At higher flows the lower of these becomes bordered on all sides by killer holes. According to Phil, this is the only place he's ever seen someone claw their way up the side while still in their boat (to avoid going down the holes, at high water). Around 1000 cfs the holes aren't that tough. Still the moves one must make in this rapid require precise maneuvering and have potentially severe consequences if you screw-up.

### **Mile 9.6 "JUST ANOTHER IV" (IV)**

This class IV can be boat scouted and is no big deal compared to the other rapids on the run.

## **Mile 10.1-10.3 TRIPLE THRILLS (IV+)**

This rapid is a lesser kindred of the Triple Falls upstream and seems very fun. Again three distinct drops, spaced a little further apart than their upstream counterparts, but maybe 1/4 as steep. This is the last rapid before the KR1 Powerhouse.

## **Mile 10.4 KR1 POWERHOUSE**

Take out on the left at the road (the turnout there can hold one or maybe two autos). It seems possible to portage the powerhouse on the right and avoid the busy road, but I haven't done it yet.

## **KR1 Run**

Downstream on the 2 mile KR1 Run lie another 4-5 class V/VI rapids.

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