

Whitewater Boating on the Chelan River -- 2012

Question 1: How satisfied were you with the overall whitewater boating experience on the Chelan River.

Answers, 31, 100%
Skips, 0, 0%

	COUNT	PERCENT
Extremely satisfied	30	97%
Moderately satisfied	1	3%
Neutral	0	0%
Extremely dissatisfied	0	0%
Slightly dissatisfied	0	0%
Slightly satisfied	0	0%
Moderately dissatisfied	0	0%

Question 2: During the weekend, there were 27 boaters on the river on Saturday and 24 on Sunday. Was crowding a problem on your run?

Answers 31, 100%
Skips, 0, 0%

	COUNT	PERCENT
Not a problem	21	68%
Barely a problem	4	13%
Marginal problem	3	10%
Slight problem	3	10%
Extremely serious problem	0	0%
Serious problem	0	0%
Very serious problem	0	0%

Question 3: Should there be a set launch time for boaters to minimize the number of boaters in each section of the river at a time?

Answers, 31, 100%
Skips, 0, 0%

	COUNT	PERCENT
No, allow paddlers to self-regulate launch times	31	100%
Yes (please suggest how this could work)	0	0%

leave it. if anything make everyone paddle at the same time, have a big number of throw bags out there was key to the safety of the day

Paddlers will always boat with their own crews at their own times.

I believe that it would be very difficult to coordinate launch times in a manner that would make everyone happy. It worked very well this year (at least on Sunday when I was there). A few of the most experienced kayakers (including the American Whitewater representative) headed downstream ahead of everyone else to ensure adequate safety was set. Then they waited for everyone else and the whole group tackled each rapid as a team, making sure everyone made it through OK. Even if launches were staggered, the groups would almost inevitably run into each other as some paddlers might take longer to scout, run, rescue, etc.

The Chelan is a special circumstance in that everyone seems to enjoy spending the whole day in there, watching and watching out for each other. I think this would be very different if it was a river that ran frequently, in which case it would be very unusual to spend so long on such a short stretch of river with such a huge group.

We tried to go early on Sunday and ended up getting bottle necked at the first rapid and decided to stay for safety (and entertainment) as the rest of the boaters arrived.

I think it was ok letting people self regulate crowding. On a river of this difficulty, the boaters running it know how and when to stagger groups in order to eliminate danger from crowding. Was it crowded? yes. Did it create danger? No. Everyone was very good about spacing and not crowding the eddies. If anything it was safer from all the extra paddlers running safety. Nothing like having three people ready to fish you out.

Start the flow early and leave it on, people can start when they like.

Please don't try to regulate this - the river is pretty well set up to have a large group and it's helpful to have lots of people setting safety at the larger drops. It's possible the event could grow to have too many paddlers to all run at once, but I think the community is capable of spreading out and/or self-regulating if that becomes an issue.

Just advertise that there is a drop-dead time for the end of the release. Then people can plan accordingly.

Question 4) If you paddled on Saturday at flows of 375, score the quality of this flow for your craft and skill level. Please consider all the flow-dependent characteristics that contribute to a high quality trip (e.g., boatability, whitewater challenge, safety, availability of surfing or other play areas, aesthetics, and length of run).

Answers, 28, 90%
Skips, 3, 10%

	COUNT	PERCENT
Totally acceptable	21	75%
Neutral	3	11%
Moderately acceptable	3	11%
Slightly acceptable	1	4%
Totally unacceptable	0	0%
Slightly unacceptable	0	0%
Moderately unacceptable	0	0%

Question 5) If you paddled on Sunday at flows of 400, score the quality of this flow for your craft and skill level. Please consider all the flow-dependent characteristics that contribute to a high quality trip (e.g., boatability, whitewater challenge, safety, availability of surfing or other play areas, aesthetics, and length of run).

Answers, 21, 68%
Skips, 10, 32%

	COUNT	PERCENT
Totally acceptable	18	86%
Slightly acceptable	1	5%
Neutral	1	5%
Moderately acceptable	1	5%
Totally unacceptable	0	0%
Slightly unacceptable	0	0%
Moderately unacceptable	0	0%

Question 6) If you could select an optimal flow for boating on this reach given your craft and skill level, what flow would you prefer? Please specify cfs.

Answers, 23, 74%
Skips, 8, 26%

400

450 i think, it would nice to have a bit more water in the last big rapid but at the same time i don't know what the gorge would look like, 400 was really good for the rafts in the gorge

400

375-400 seemed perfect

375cfs

400

400 cfs

You guys are doing great with flows. I paddled Sat because that was my available day, however I would prefer some more water. Wouldn't mind seeing it in the 450-500cfs range.

450

400 - 425 cfs

400

400 cfs

Hard to say, this was my first year. I think 400 cfs might have been a bit better than 375. Both totally fine.

This was my first run and I did not run on Sunday. 375 was great, but do not have any other flow to judge from.

This was my first year and did not run Sunday. .

375 cfs

375-400

425 cfs

I think it's pretty ideal

375CFS

400 was fine but more people seemed to struggle with this flow

400 or so is probably good, would like to see it a little higher. but not too much higher :)

375cfs was more enjoyable for me

Question 7: What aspect of the paddling experience did you enjoy the most?

Answers, 27, 87%
Skips, 4, 13%

Everything!

the friendships!

Paddling every rapid was a huge up for me, even more so, was paddling with 20 or so new people I have never kayaker with before who immediately became friends after/during the first rapid. As soon as people start setting safety for others no questions, an instant bond is made.

Group dynamic, sweet canyon, good rapids.

Character and challenge of the Chelan Gorge rapids.

Unique and powerful hydraulics!

The challenging whitewater and beautiful canyon

The time of year. September is a great month to do the release due to lower levels around the state.

The large group can be nice if approached appropriately.

Firing off Pinnacle!

The beautiful canyon with crystal-blue water and the amazing quality of whitewater: specifically, sitting below the Throne and looking back upstream-- simply astounding. The camaraderie of the boaters, hardshells and inflatables alike, was also pretty awesome, and Kris and Judy (the PUD personnel I met) made this great experience even more incredible (yay for cookies!). Thank you all!

Warm weather, and fun times with the group

The boating community aspect and the friendliness if the Chelan PUD team.

Group fun, big rapids

That's hard. The whole weekend was fun. Met tons of new people who came from far and wide. Everyone was great and supportive. There was no other kayaking happening that weekend so a great crew showed up. The first rapid in the gorge is one of the highest quality pieces of whitewater I have ever paddled.

Weather/camping was awesome. Despite being a very challenging piece of whitewater, I felt very safe due to the amount of safety and knowledge present. A totally unique experience that I will look forward to every year.

The team work (this include safety), sheer beauty of the canyon and great rapids.

The super friendly and genuine people from Chelan!

Beautiful water, rapids and scenery

The outstanding support from all of the Kayakers (we rafted)....they were great!

Running Pinnacle!

Good weather and warm water during the dry season.

I liked the hospitality of the PUD.

Warm water, quality of rapids, quality of hosts. Chelan PUD and Kris are amazing!

The warm water and group cheering.

The character of the run

Quality of boaters there and beautiful river.

Camaraderie, and the high level of safety and paddling ability of the other boaters on the river.

The uniqueness of the run and the friendly Chelan PUD staff.

Question 8: What aspect of the paddling experience did you enjoy the least?

Answers, 25, 81%

Skips, 6, 19%

Nothing!

the smell

Having the day end because it was so awesome.

None

That all the boaters got stalled out at the first rapid - too many people for my liking. Might I add that my team could have left that situation by moving on, but we chose not to.

Rocks are very porus and sticky (probably because they aren't blasted with water all year long).

Security guards and sign ups

The paddle in and out is pretty lousy at 375 cfs. Maybe allow hike-in access near the top of the gorge. It looks like there are some trails around there. However, I don't know if it is a sensitive area for wildlife or plants.

I would prefer to hike a quarter mile vs paddle several in low water.

How long the river takes to run.

The only part of the whole experience that I could even think to list as "least enjoyable" is the fact that it only happens once per year...

The hole below entrance exam rapid!!!

None

In honesty, I enjoyed every minute. The last rapid is a bit trashy but it's a small price to pay for the gold upstream.

None (except the sticky rocks)!

That it had to end.

smoke from the fire

The last section where we had to portage a few boulder strewn runs, but we were rafting so it was expected

Rafts

Slow transit time of large group made for a lot of waiting around and no possibility of multiple laps.

The 6 hour run on Saturday was a bit on the long side. I would rather not do that again. I would also say setting safety (ie having someone out on the rock) at the boulder sieve is important.

None

The beatdowns

Seeing people who were not good enough to be on the river

Going right at Double Slide.

That it had to end!

Question 9: Would you participate in this event again?

Answers, 30, 97%

Skips, 1, 3%

	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes, each year	26	87%
Yes, every other year	4	13%
No, I probably wouldn't come back	0	0%
Yes, every 3 or more years	0	0%

Question 10: Would you recommend this Chelan River whitewater boating experience to other boaters?

Answers, 30, 97%

Skips, 1, 3%

	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	30	100%
No	0	0%

as long as they have solid class V skills.

And I already have, should be more Canucks down for next year.

If they are qualified it is a great run with warm water when little else is flowing.

With a disclaimer that if you are participating you need to be on form - the gorge could be an unforgiving place if you are having a bad day.

Great event and support by the PUD. It has a good festival vibe to it, making it very appealing.

This is world class whitewater run that will grow in popularity and participation each year

Good run

It's a great river short dry tops in September!

I would recommend the experience to skilled and competent class V boaters. This is not a place to introduce someone to class V.

It's an unforgettable experience, worth it for any class V+ kayaker.

Great river and world class rapids. Warm water and sun also add to the experience.

Unique, steep, warm, easy to set safety. Clean Pool Drops!!!! However it is definitely a hard piece of whitewater that isn't run often, so having solid skills is definitely a prerequisite.

I would recommend this run to qualified boaters. It isn't the hardest run out there, however it is challenging. What an experience. Thank you so much Kris and Tom!!! Nothing but great memories!

Very raftable for experienced paddlers....Thanks for letting us participate!

Unique whitewater experience for the area with a great warm welcome from PUD and AW representatives.

Warm water boating in Washington state is really non-existent, so this is a very special run. I would caution the difficulty of the run.

This is a premier river, with top quality rapids and town to fit all the needs of every paddler.

Yes, but only if they have the skills. It's not a place to find out if you have them or not.

Great run for Class V paddlers!