

Lower Log Ride (Lower South Branch Feather River)

Rating: 3C III *****

Time: 7-9 hours

Season: Low: June-Sept Norm: July-Sept High: Aug-Sept

Number of Raps: 6 + 1 Jump

Longest Rap: ~130ft

Gear: 2x 200ft rope, 125ft webbing, 6 rapides, wetsuit, neoprene gloves, technical canyoneering gear

Rubber: At least 4mm/3mm. 5mm or more recommended under most conditions. The water is very cold!

Hazards: Jumps to 10ft, raps in waterfalls, numerous downclimbs, natural anchors. A solid understanding of swift water canyoneering technique and basic natural anchor skills are required.

Vehicle: High Clearance 2WD or 4WD

Car Shuttle: About 5 very slow miles (45min each way)

Approach: ~1/2 mile and -1000 feet

Exit: None

Good Eats: Pangaea Café in Quincy!!

Camping: There is a great, large campsite at the bridge over Cascade Creek. There are also many campgrounds and other dispersed camping options in the area.

Introduction:

Lower Log Ride is the second of two spectacular canyon routes that fall though an incredible and remote gorge in the Feather River watershed. Lower Log Ride picks up where Upper Log Ride left off at the Log Pool, where in 2007 we found a swirling soup of drift wood pieces the size of substantial trees. Lower Log Ride delivers a stunning technical section with rappels along side raging waterfalls, swims through granite slots and a myriad of downclimbing and scrambling problems to keep things exciting. There is even a jump and occasional slide mixed in to round out this awesome route.

Lower Log Ride is situated in a significant drainage and will contain a large amount of water (in canyoneering terms anyway) at all times. All this water flows naturally through the canyon and will fluctuate with the progress of the snowmelt. This fact creates two logistical challenges for the canyoneer. First, you must time your decent so that peak snowmelt is long past. Too little water will not be a big concern in Upper Log Ride. However, too much water could be deadly. Under high flow the entire route would turn into a tremendous drowning machine. Second, the water in Upper Log Ride is always cold and you will be in it for hours. Don't be fooled by air temperatures in the 90s, a 4-5mm wetsuit will be necessary. Do not enter this canyon under high flow or without sufficient thermal protection. You have been warned!

Lower Log Ride is very playful. As long as the flow is manageable, the canyon can be relatively safe as class C canyons go. However, this canyon is not suitable for raw beginners without advanced leadership. Careful routefinding and advanced judgment will be necessary to safely descend the route.

Driving Directions:

A carefully driven high clearance 2WD vehicle can reach the Lower Logride trailhead in dry conditions. However the road between the upper and lower trailheads is very rocky. Some may wish for a 4WD vehicle here. Lower Log Ride requires a relatively long car shuttle. The distance between the start and finish trailheads is only about 5 miles but the road is rocky and the going is very slow. Allow about 45 minutes each way for the car shuttle

From the city of Oroville, take highway 162 east. Turn right on Forbestown Road. Go about 6.1 miles and make a left on Lumpkin Road. Go about 11.5 miles and make a right on Forest Service Road 27. Stay straight when Forest Service 27 turns into Forest Service 94 (do not go towards Lumpkin Ridge). After about 15 miles you will cross the bridge over Cascade Creek. There is a nice campsite below this bridge beside the creek. Continue 3 miles, following signs for Milsap Bar and crossing the bridge over the South Branch Feather River along the way to the intersection with Forest Service 62 (Milsap Bar Rd.). Go left onto Milsap Bar Rd. (a dirt road) and continue 2.3 miles to a pullout on the left. This pullout was easy to recognize in 2007 as it had 2 dead refrigerators below the embankment and a small but distinct trail leading down hill from the pullout. This is known as the Seven Falls Trailhead.

To reach the exit trailhead, continue about 5 miles downhill on Milsap Bar Rd. to the Milsap Bar campground. The turn into the campground is on the left and is almost a 180-degree u-turn. This turn is easy to miss. If you reach the bridge over the Middle Fork Feather River you have gone too far. Park in the day use spots next to the bathroom. It is also possible to camp at the Milsap Bar campground. There is a pit toilet and no water. However, on summer weekends



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this campground can turn into Oroville party central and may not be up to your standards of solitude.

Approach:

From the Seven Falls trailhead hike steeply downhill on the Seven Falls Trail. This trail is very steep and in places is covered in dead leaves making it slippery. Watch your step. About halfway down the trail splits. The forks rejoin a short way downhill but the right fork is less steep. If you like loose trail that is so steep that it necessitates fixed handlines then the left fork is your option. Either way, continue descending to the South Branch Feather River.

Canyon:

Once you reach the south branch, suit up and get your harness and gear on. The action starts almost immediately at the large drop about 20 yards downstream that you have no doubt sensed the presence of. Starting with this first rappel, the bulk of the technical section comes in rapid succession as a pool-extravaganza!

Rap 1: 130 feet from a slung flake on the RIGHT (LDC). You'll have to scramble up a rock on the right a bit to reach this flake. This is a single drop that ends in a pool. Set rope length or be prepared for a floating disconnect.

Rap 2: 130 feet from a tree on the RIGHT (LDC). This is a single drop that ends in a pool. Set rope length or be prepared for a floating disconnect.

Rap 3: 100 Feet from a tree on the RIGHT (LDC). This tree is on a ledge about 15 feet up but the anchor can be reached from below when properly rigged. Beware of poison oak around the anchor. This is a single drop that ends on terra firma. As long as the flow is down you won't get pummeled by the massive falls beside you even though it seems like you might!

From the bottom of the 3rd rappel scramble up a boulder filled gully on the right a short way to a grassy landing. From here, traverse out left (LDC) on a giant granite projection.

Rap 4: 130 feet from 2 bolts placed at the CENTER of the granite projection. This rap is free hanging at the start and is steep in some parts and not so much in others. The idea is to continue the rappel all the way to the point where the fall line rejoins the main watercourse. This rap ends in a pool. Set rope length or be prepared for a floating disconnect. From here swim, scramble and downclimb through boulders as the river makes a sharp turn to the left (LDC).

Rap 5: 30 feet from a boulder pinch on the LEFT (LDC). This rap leads into a watery slot. Set rope length or be prepared for a floating disconnect.

Swim pools, scramble and downclimb downstream quite a ways. Just when it looks like things are winding down you reach one last technical obstacle at a 40 ft waterfall.

Rap 6 + Jump 1: Rap 30 feet from a boulder on the RIGHT (LDC). This rap will take you to a ledge where you will be positioned nicely to jump 10 feet to the pool below. Be sure to send one canyoneer down to check the landing first. Of course anyone who prefers not to jump can rap all the way to the pool.

Scramble and swim downstream some more. Enjoy the beautiful scenery. Finally you will reach a large pool adjacent to the Milsap Bar Campground. You may see people... They may not be like you. In 2007 this pool had a rope swing above it. This rope swing can be high entertainment if time and situation allow.

Exit:

Once you are finished playing in the final pool, exit on the right and find a use trail ascending through the rocks. Follow this trail a short distance to the Milsap Bar Campground and your car.

Multi-Day:

It is possible to chain Upper and Lower Log Ride together for a fantastic two-day canyoneering adventure. If this is your plan, there is camp suitable for 3-5 people on a smallish island in the middle of the watercourse just downstream from the log pool.

Non-Technical:

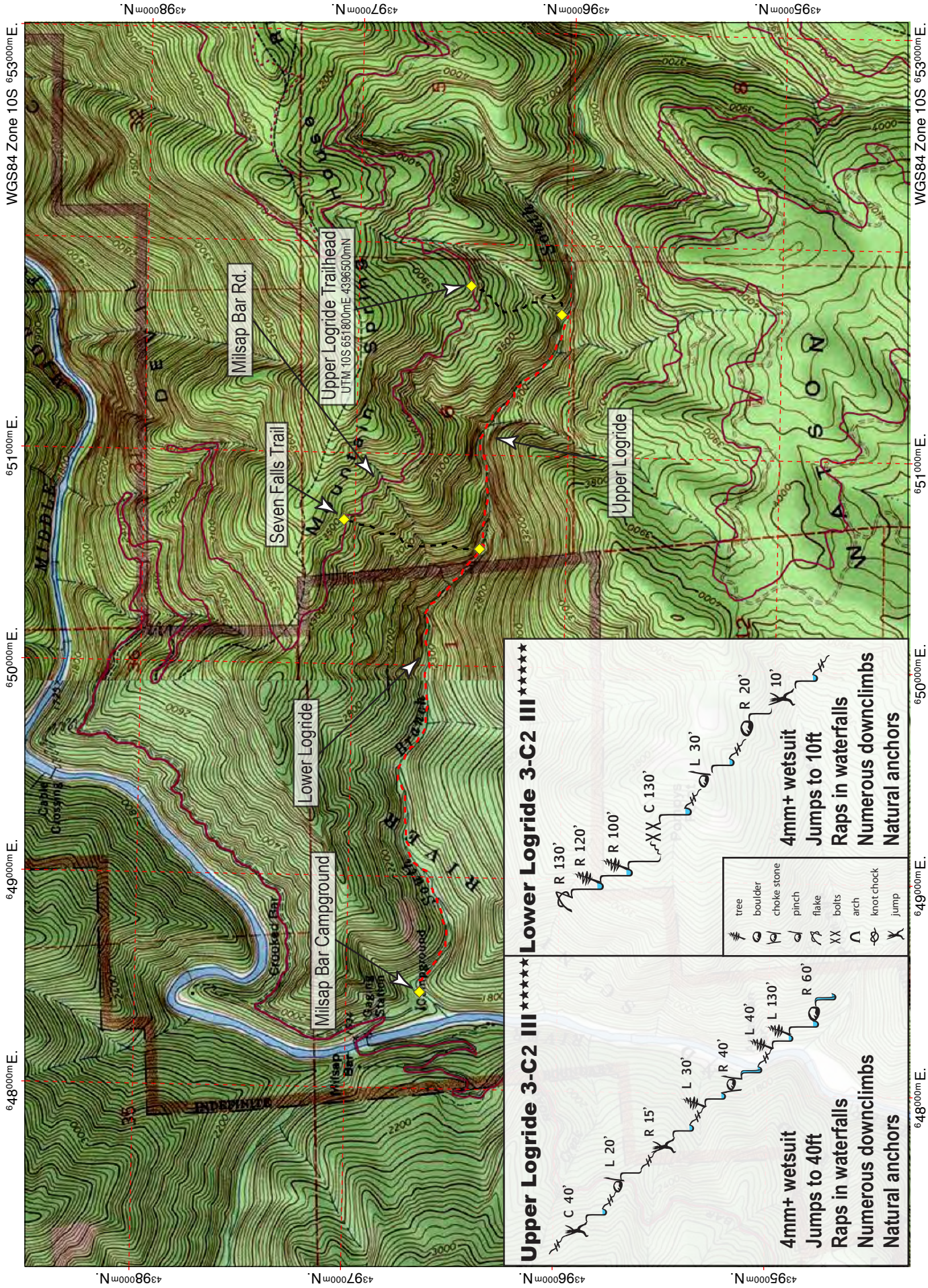
The top and bottom of Lower Log Ride are wonderful playgrounds for non-technical hikers. From the bottom of the Seven Falls trail scramble upstream to find 2 amazing pools. The first one you arrive at is the Log Pool and boast exciting swimming with the trees. To reach the second pool, look for a bypass on the right (LUC) that climbs steeply through the woods. Use this bypass to access the next pool that is feed by a spectacular 2 stage 150 falls.

From the bottom of Lower Log Ride a nice river scramble can be had. A wetsuit will be required for this adventure. Scramble upstream from the final pool in Lower Log Ride. You will encounter many, often large, swimming pools and a couple hours of fun river scrambling. The end of the line is the 40-foot falls that is the last rappel/jump in Lower Log Ride.

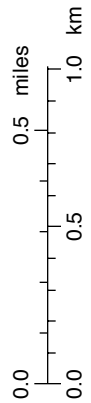


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