

Little Utah Brown Water Dream (Ten Mile Creek)

Rating: 3C III ***

Time: 6-8 hours

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

Number of Raps: 4 plus at least 2 good slides

Longest Rap: ~170ft

Gear: 2x 200ft rope, 75ft webbing, 4 rapides, 2 ½" baby angle pins, wetsuit, neoprene gloves, technical canyoneering gear

Rubber: At least 2mm/3mm.

Hazards: Dam release canyon. You must visually verify that that flow is low and manageable before committing to the route. Very slippery canyon, even sticky rubber is no match. Raps in waterfalls, natural anchors, anchors in the watercourse. A good understanding of class C canyoneering technique and good natural anchor skills are required.

Vehicle: Passenger car

Car Shuttle: About 9.5mi

Approach: 1/2mi

Exit: 1/4mi

Good Eats: Check out the Kings Canyon Lodge for a beer and an interesting old school experience. For a really odd scene, visit the Hume Lake general store for basic supplies.

Camping: The USFS and NPS operate a number of campgrounds outside and inside Kings Canyon NP. Princess campground is convenient and nice.

Introduction:

Little Utah Brown Water Dream ("Little Utah Brown") is a romp of a canyon located just outside of Kings Canyon National Park. It got its name from its turbid dam release water that has a similar color to the water in the finest southern Utah potholes. Fortunately, unlike southern Utah pothole water, that water in Little Utah Brown is flowing and doesn't stink like a rotting pachyderm!

One of Little Utah Brown's greatest charms is also one of its greatest challenges. It is slippery in there. Like, really really slippery, be careful. The low friction environment also makes for some of the greatest slides around. There are at least two no rope slides in Little Utah Brown that are fast, long and really fun. In addition, many of the rappels yield well to the flip over and rappel/slide on your back technique.

All of the water in Little Utah Brown is dam release from Hume Lake immediately upstream. The dam is an old one and release is controlled by hand turned valves at the base of the dam. These valves can be easily seen from the path along the dam. It is important that you check the flow in the canyon before committing and do not commit to the canyon if there have been recent rain or snowstorms or if storms are in the forecast. If it is mid to late summer and the weather is fair, chances are that the dam will only be releasing a minimal amount of water and descent conditions will be good.

Little Utah Brown is pretty straightforward and will probably be a romp for the experienced canyoneer. The canyon is also a great place for canyoneers to hone their class C skills. Don't let the brown water

dream turn you off, Little Utah Brown is a really fun way to spend a summer day.

Driving Directions:

From the Grant Grove visitor center on CA-180 in Kings Canyon National Park go east on CA-180 (towards Cedar Grove) for 6.1 miles to the intersection with Hume Lake Rd.. Make a right onto Hume Lake Rd. and follow it 2.7 miles to a pullout on the left side of the road overlooking a large grassy slope with a thicket of manzanita at the top that can fit 3-4 cars. This is the upper trailhead.

To reach the lower trailhead return to CA-180 and continue east and downhill though switchbacks with increasingly spectacular views of Kings Canyon 6.7 miles to the Bridge over Ten Mile Creek. There is a pullout on the right side of the road that can fit 2-3 cars. This is the lower trailhead.

Approach:

From the upper trailhead, find a swath cut through the manzanita thicket just downhill from the pullout. Follow this swath down the hill and out on to the grassy slope below. A little bushwhacking may be required at the bottom of the manzanita. Once on the grassy slope head downhill and left across a minor drainage to gain a minor lateral ridge. Follow this ridge down over easy terrain. When you reach the tree/brush line fairly close to the creek and the terrain begins to steepen it is best to head right and route find your way though the brush and over slabs down towards the creek. Careful route finding with reveal access to the watercourse just below a small falls without any rappelling.



This route description is licensed under a Creative Commons license, some rights reserved. (See www.sierracanyons.org for more information)

Canyon:

Suit up and get harnesses etc. on on the rocks when you reach the watercourse. You will immediately notice the slippery nature of the canyon. The flow here should seem low and very manageable. If it does not, there is too much water coming out of Hume Lake and a descent should not be attempted. Once you are ready start down canyon. You will soon encounter a pronounced bend in the watercourse to the left (LDC). A few minor but slippery downclimbs and a bypass on the left (LDC) around a falls in a small slot lead to the beginning of the technical section.

Slide 1: 30 feet down a fairly steep watery slab. No rope required. However send one canyoneer down to the pool to look for submerged obstacles at the base of the slide. Continue down canyon.

Rap 1: 80 feet from a tree on the LEFT (LDC). This is a single drop that heads over slabs and then down a falls and into a pool. Set the rope length or be prepared for a floating disconnect.

Rap 2: 125 feet from a chock stone on the LEFT (LDC) that heads right (LDC) down a spine and then over a falls and into a pothole. Slide rappelling the falls on your back is good fun. Set the rope length or be prepared for a floating disconnect.

Rap 3: 170 feet from a slung boulder in the MIDDLE of the pothole you are standing in. Replacing webbing here requires fishing around a bit underwater. This is a double drop that heads left over slabs then down a falls that can be slide-rappelled and into a pool in a slot. Swim/wade this pool and continue the rap down the next smaller falls in the slot. Set the rope length or be prepared for a floating disconnect.

Rap 4: 100 feet from 2 pins (1/2" baby angles) on the RIGHT (LDC) near the end of the slot. This is a double drop that heads right over slabs and down into a small watery pothole then out of this pothole and into the next one below. Set the rope length or be prepared for a floating disconnect.

Slide 2: 10 feet down the steep watercourse into the next pothole down. This slide is fast and easy to get a little air on. It can also easily be bypassed on the right (LDC).

From here you will round a sharp corner to the left (LDC) and probably emerge back out into the sun. From this point on, downclimb (steeply at first) and swim your way through the remaining canyon. The obstacles are interesting and none or too difficult. If you scramble outside of the watercourse keep your

eye out for rattlesnakes. Towards the end of the canyon you will see some small diversion dams and associated piping.

Exit:

When you get to a point where CA-180 and the bridge over Ten Mile Creek are visible in front of you. Look for a use trail that starts in a minor drainage on the right (LDC). Follow this use trail less than ¼ mile to the road and your car spot. Watch out for poison oak on the trail.



SIERRA CANYONS

This route description is licensed under a Creative Commons license, some rights reserved. (See www.sierracanyons.org for more information)

