

2019 Green River Hydrodynamic Experience.

During the 2019 Veteran Expeditions Green River Excursion I had the opportunity to explore the depths and power of the river first hand, this is a summary of my unique underwater experience.

Upon entering a set of large rapids during the trip myself and Adam Morash piloting an inflatable paddled into the draw of a large rapid in order to retain control and steering. Adam was seated in the front and I the back, as the front of the kayak rose over the rapid we gained excessive speed and realized we were catching up with the raft to our front we turned left to go around the raft as we met another large rapid and as the kayak met the rapid rising over the second large wave we were hit by a third rapid coming across our bow from the 11 o'clock position rolling the front of the kayak right and into the air.

As I saw Adams' Vibram five finger wrapped feet do a slow motion windmill roll to the right I knew we were going into the river, I inhaled sharply just in time to hold my breath before rolling underwater and being pushed down into the darkness about 15 ft. after tumbling and rolling a few times as if in a giant washing machine, I then felt myself being launched up and as the water around me grew lighter I exhaled sharply and got ready to breathe again, surfacing momentarily I again inhaled sharply as deeply as possible and felt myself tumble under while being pushed into deeper darker water. When I could see almost no light and the water got colder I hit the bottom wrenching the paddle from my right hand, I then bounced off a large rock which lightly struck my right thigh as I continued to tumble, then the weirdest thing happened I landed again but this time on my feet in a crouched position on the bottom felt like I had stopped moving. My first thought was to push off the bottom as I was taught in drown proofing doing bobs in the Army, as I pushed I didn't even move, my next thought was to conserve energy and relax in the water as I was taught in free diving, thinking my life vest would start lifting me soon. As I remained motionless in that position on the bottom, I thought my live vest should be working by now! After which I remember hearing what sounded like a very powerful shower nozzle or waterfall sound on my left side. Thinking this was very weird, I opened my eyes, it was extremely dark and It didn't feel like I was moving, my vest didn't seem to be working and the water seemed loud and pressing only on my left side. I decided that if the vest wasn't working it was time for me to find a way out , I wasn't sure how much air I had left so I began feeling around and I felt a large boulder in front of me, I seemed to be oriented on my right side feet bent under me pointed to the right at about 45-65 degrees, so I grabbed onto the boulder in front of me and started crawling to the right and after what seemed to be about six or seven feet the water of the river grabbed me again and I was back in the washing machine but at least I was rising. As the water around me started getting brighter first brown then brown orange , yellowish then I started seeing the light of the surface as I bobbed up exhaling my breath and gasping for air. I oriented down river and started swimming with the current around some logs while hearing Adam yell chastising me for dropping my beer and that he'd recovered my paddle I then saw the pontoon raft orient to intercept me while trying to breath and laugh at the same time.

These are the details I remember in order, I hope this helps.

All The Best, Jim Chouinard.