

CDEC

flows
YPD

→ 3-4 days consistent flows to settle
900-1500 cfs

Deer Creek (enters Yuba)
1100 → if 600-800
will muddy
Yuba.



Fly Fishing Traditions

The Lower Yuba – UC Davis

email clay
Tom in Grass Valley
calls at Real Angler
Fly shop in Grass
Valley

There are times of the year that the Lower Yuba has the characteristics of a tailwater with bottom released flows from Englebright Dam. During these times the river can be spring creek like with crystal clear water and wary trout where fishing with stealth is a must. This is the time of year that the flows. The flows stabilize from somewhere between 850 and 1600 cfs. This happens at two specific times of year. The first in mid to late summer once the agricultural flows are dropped down and second during the winter and early spring when the powers that be determine that they need to hold water back for summer agricultural need. These two periods are when the river fishes as a true tailwater.

Once winter hits the river can turn into a raging river with water pouring over the top of Englebright dam with flows over 30,000, to even 80,000 cfs. The river seems more like a brawling Alaskan Coastal river during these times. Just like a freestone river.

Let's break the river down by seasons and compare flow regimes for January through April.

January through April - More like a Freestone

The Lower Yuba River in the period between January and April can be all over the place. It can drop down to fishable levels of 900 cfs to 2000 cfs with decent clarity, 2 to 8 feet or it can be a raging torrent. In 2015 the flows have been lower than normal due to our regional drought conditions. The flows can get as low as 650 cfs between storms. Clarity can go from gin clear to close to zero right after a storm.

As the bigger storms come in the flows can change uncontrollably. As of this date in 2015 this has not happened. When it does happen it is the result of the three branches of the Yuba River all flowing into Englebright Reservoir and the inability of that impound to handle flows over 5600 cfs +/- . The Englebright reservoir has a bottom release dam that has the capacity of releasing about 5600 cfs. When flows are 5600 cfs or lower the water is released from the bottom of the reservoir. Once the flows

exceed the 5600 +/- it flows unregulated over the top. This can turn the Lower Yuba into a freestone stream, flooding out of its normal channels and cutting corners, moving thousands of tons of water and changing the characteristics of the river. Let me try to explain how.

When conditions are such that there is snow up high in the Sierras and a warmer storm comes in with rain at higher elevations, the snow pack starts melting and running off, which results in huge amounts of water running down every creek, and tributary which eventually ends up in Englebright Reservoir. This is when there can be flows like 30,000, and up to 120,000 cfs. This happened just two weeks ago in December of 2012. These type of flows can affect the bug life in the fishery for years to come. The Lower Yuba is a channelized river and it is in the channel that the bugs live. When big flows run over the top of Englebright the rocks, boulders and gravel get pushed around and the river gets "rolled". The bugs live in this part of the river and the next thing they know is that their homes are getting destroyed and I believe so are they.

The caddis population above the Parks Bar Bridge has been almost nonexistent in the past number of years. The Skwala populations are also down above the bridge. So far there has been a smattering of Skwalas in the vicinity of the UC Davis station. Enough to get the fish interested but not really keyed in. The last few years when the Skwalas were showing, we had meager success above the Parks Bar Bridge while guide friends were having bigger days throwing Skwalas below the bridge. Since about 2012 the further you'd head down below the Parks Bar Bridge the more bugs and hatches you'd encounter. This has been the trend. The fish will go where the bugs are.

This year, 2015, there has been a tremendous amount of fishing pressure below the Parks Bar Bridge. This is due to the Yuba being one of the few rivers with conditions favorable for fishing. The Yuba fish will seek solitude when the fishing pressure ramps up and a lot of them have moved upstream of Parks Bar Bridge. When conditions are right this bodes for good fishing in the UC Davis Station area.

So in summary, flows in January through the end of April can be all over the place, it can fish like a tailwater when the flows drop and stabilize at lower levels or it can become unfishable during high winter storms. The fishable range is from 800 cfs to 2,000 cfs when walk and wading of up to 6000 cfs when fishing from a boat. With that said you really need 2 feet of visibility to make it worth your while. The water will typically be off colored and the river will fish more like a freestone than a tailwater.

Fishing the UC Davis Station

In the description of the river in this area I will refer to the two sides of the river as;

- (a) The side of the river where you arrive and park will be referred to as the "North Side".
- (b) The opposite side of the river which will require to cross by wading will be referred to as the "South Side".

Crossing the River

To really take advantage of fishing the river in the vicinity of the UC Davis Station you should consider crossing the river to access certain runs of the river. Carrying and using a wading staff is necessary. Crossing with a partner is a good idea too.

Also remember, if you do not stay at the waters' edge you will be trespassing according to the neighboring land owners. Climbing up and around large rock formations is also considered trespassing. Stay along the waters' edge and you are good. You legally accessed the river from the UC Davis Station and as long as you stay at the river's edge there is no problem. The UC Davis property extended upstream from the parking area for about 1 ½ miles. It extends downstream about ¾ of a mile.

If you should choose to cross the river, there are three main areas that you can cross the river.

- (1) The closest crossing place is just downstream from the pavilion. You can go downstream from the pavilion about 200 yards to the tailout of the run. This is shallow on the south side with faster currents in the center. This is not for the inexperienced wader. It is crossable here at flows up to 900 cfs. From this crossing you can work upstream and fish about ¾ of a mile, until you get to a vertical rock face. You can fish downstream to the "Foundation" rock.
- (2) Second and easier is to walk down stream about 1/3 of a mile and cross just above the big rock cropping on the south side of the river. This is known as the Foundation. It is shallow on the north side and there are numerous salmon redds on the south side. Pick your path across at the top just upstream of the salmon redds. If you encounter salmon redds be careful to stay on top of the redds and don't walk through any buckets. From this crossing you can fish upstream same as crossing number 1.
- (3) The third and easiest is to walk downstream about ½ mile to the run just below the "Foundation" rock. This is shallow all the way across. From this crossing you can fish upstream to the "Foundation" rock and downstream as much as 1 ½ miles.

Fishing Spots

I will detail some of the best fishing spots which are accessible from the UC Davis Station.

Upstream Hike

From the UC Davis Pavilion if you walk to the east staying at approximately the same elevation you will encounter a road that parallels the river staying above the river about 75 feet or so. Stay on this road and hike about 1 mile upstream. The river will take a bend to the south. Keep going until the road opens up on the right to an extensive gravel bar. Walk down to the water's edge and then continue walking and fishing upstream. There is about 1 mile of some of the best water on the river. Pools, runs, tailouts and flats. This is what you've really come for. The hike is worth the time spent.

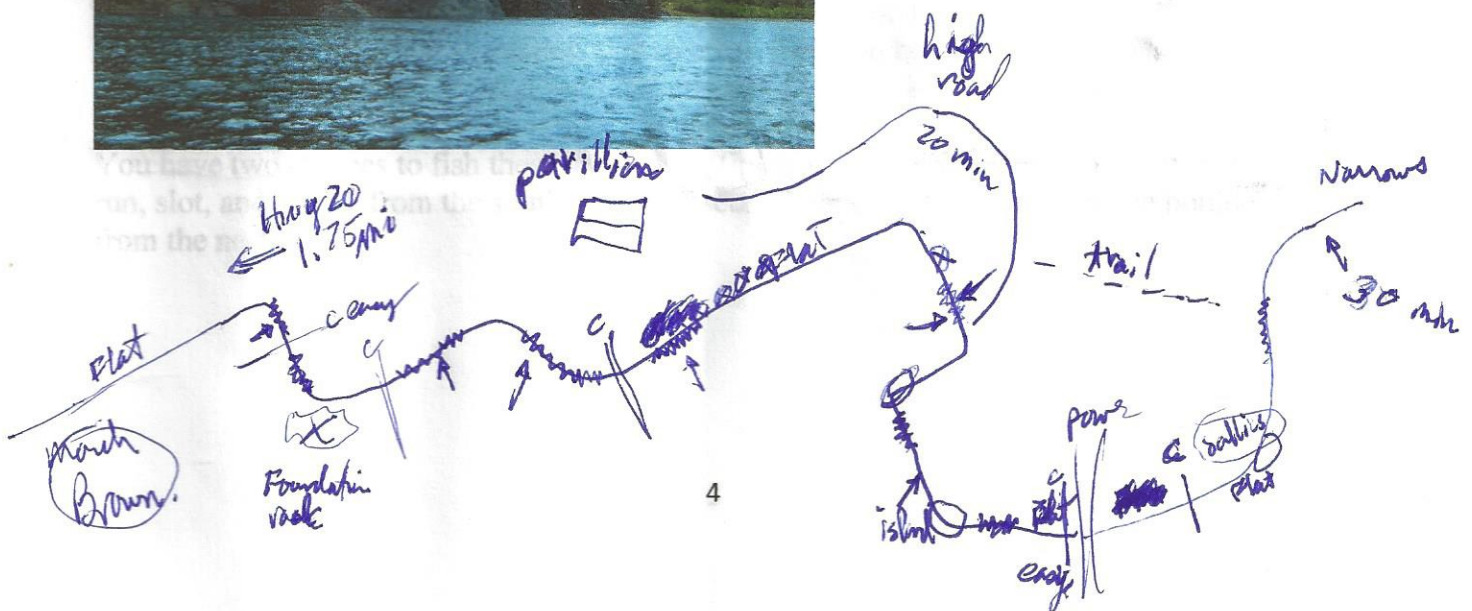
Slot and Tailout right below the Pavilion

There is a slot and tailout just below and downstream of the Pavilion. You can fish this from either side, but crossing and fishing it from the south side is best. This is indicator or tight-line nymphing water. Great slot on the north side.

"Foundation Hole" Area



If you hike downstream from the Pavilion about 1/3 of a mile you will see the "Foundation" rock across the river. There are salmon redd buckets just upstream of the "Foundation". Trout like these buckets. There is a nice drop-off and slot directly under the "Foundation" rock. Great deep indicator water.



Willows Below the Pavilion



The run directly below the pavilion tails out and forms a riffle fast run as it moves downstream. It runs down and takes a slight left turn into a longer wider run. It is about 1/3 to 1/2 mile downstream. This run slows down into the "Foundation" rock. There is a line of willows on the river right. Willows equals Skwalas. Fish along and under the overhanging willows. This is best done by

crossing the river to the south side and fishing back to the north side. Great run.

Drop-off below the Foundation Rock

There is a run below the Foundation Rock that flow downstream and take a bend to the left. There is a great drop-off at this bend. It is only fishable by crossing to the south side. Indicator and Tight line nymphing techniques work here.

Just above the drop-off is a line of willows. Trout hang in the water right at the bank looking for bugs funneling down. I Skwala with a nymph dropper is a good tactic here. You must cross to the south side. Wade across to take position to make downstream presentations to the bank. Experienced waders only.

Run Directly Below and Upstream of the UC Davis Pavilion

When you arrive at the UC Davis Station the river is flowing from your left to the right. There is a covered pavilion overlooking the river. When you look upstream of the pavilion you see a long run with fairly constant slower flow. This has a deeper section on the left, (looking upstream) and shallow water on the right.

Directly below the pavilion there is a deeper slot and tailout. This is best fished from the south side of the river which requires you to cross. This can be fished from the North side from casting from higher ground, boulders etc. although this is not as efficient.

You have two choices to fish these areas. The first and best option is to cross and fish the run, slot, and tailout from the south side. The second option is to fish it from the boulders from the north side.

Bugs and Fly Patterns – February and March

Bugs	Nymphs	Dries	Other
Skwala Stoneflies <i>Perlodidae</i>	Mercer's Skwala Stone	Tom's Skwala	
	Jimmy Legs Skwala	FFT's Knothead	
		FFT's Skwalanator	
March Brown Mayfly <i>Rithrogenia</i>	Western March Brown Nymph	March Brown Hairwing Dun	March Brown Flymph
	Hare's Ear	March Brown Biot Parachute	March Brown Soft Hackle
	Birds Nest	March Brown Parachute	Quigley's March Brown Cripple
Blue Wing Olive – <i>Baetis</i>	Hogan's Military May	Quigley's Split Flag BWO	Quigley's Olive Marabou cripple
	Sloan's Mighty May	Olive Comparadun	Quigley's Film Critic
	Hogan's S&M	Sparkle Dun	Hogan's Sipper Baetis
	Flashback Pheasant Tail	Baetis Parachute	
Pale Morning Duns <i>Ephemerella</i>	Burks HBI Nymph	Quigley's Split Flag PMD	Quigley Marabou Cripple PMD
	Hogan's Military May	Sparkle Dun PMD	Hogan's Sipper PMD
	Hogan's Red Headed Stepchild	Quigley's Loopy PMD	Harrop's Last Chance Cripple
	Pheasant Tail Nymph		Quigley's Half Dun
			Quigley's Film Critic PMD
Salmon Eggs			Troutbeads
			Pettis Eggs
			Unreal Eggs
			Glo Bugs