



Through the Federal Power Act, The National Park Service recommends provisions to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to mitigate and enhance conservation and recreation resources associated with licensing dams.

## Rock Creek - Cresta, California

### Pioneering Recreational Whitewater Flow Studies



**On September 18, 2000** recreational and environmental groups as well as state and federal resource agencies reached a settlement agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) dictating future operations of the Rock Creek-Cresta Hydroelectric Project. The agreement struck a balance between continued hydropower generation and ecological and recreational restoration of the North Fork Feather River.

The North Fork Feather River is a tremendous whitewater resource that offers boating opportunities from Class III to V in a beautiful setting close to the cities of Chico and Oroville in Northern California. The Rock Creek-Cresta project is situated between PG&E's upstream and downstream hydropower facilities, the Upper North Fork Feather hydroelectric project and Poe hydroelectric project respectively. These two projects contain 4 reservoirs, 4 dewatered river channels, and 4 powerhouses collectively.

#### National Leader in Whitewater Studies

As with many relicensings, important work to protect river recreation often takes place after the license is issued by FERC. The Rock Creek - Cresta Relicensing Project has become the national leader for studying the impacts of recreational and pulse flow release events on important aspects of river health. The 2005 study plans looked at the impacts these flows have on benthic macroinvertebrates, turbidity, fish displacement and the endangered foothill yellow legged frog.

#### Whitewater Flow Recommendations Imminent

In September of 2005 the Ecological Resources Committee (ERC) convened a peer review panel to review and analyze the impacts of whitewater flow releases on the project area. Drawing from the study results and peer review the ERC is in the process of recommending whitewater flow release parameters to FERC. It is through this post-licensing process that the National Park Service is working to affect change on the North Fork Feather River allowing continued generation of hydropower, improving the ecosystem, and at the same time increasing opportunities for recreational users.

*American Whitewater is grateful to the National Park Service for their continued commitment to the protection of whitewater recreation and the ecosystem of the Feather River.*

Dave Stendorf, American Whitewater



*Whitewater release on the Rock Creek Reach of the North Fork Feather River – courtesy, American Whitewater*



*Whitewater flow release on the Rock Creek Reach of the North Fork Feather River – courtesy of American Whitewater*

National Park Service provides technical assistance on recreation and conservation issues to all participants in Hydropower Licensing Proceedings of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. NPS makes recommendations on recreation access and facilities, instream flows for recreation, and protection for riparian corridors and conservation buffer zones. Visit our website for more information on Hydropower Assistance at <http://www.nps.gov/nrcr/programs/hydro/>

For more information about National Park Service project involvement, contact Stephen Bowes at [stephen\\_bowes@nps.gov](mailto:stephen_bowes@nps.gov).