

## THE BUBBLE OF THE TUOLUMNE RIVER

What makes your rafting experience a possibility? **THE BUBBLE OF THE TUOLUMNE RIVER!**

Water flowing down the Tuolumne River originates high in the **Sierra Nevada** in Yosemite National Park, passes through multiple breathtaking locations (including Tuolumne Meadows), and enters **Hetch Hetchy Valley**. As it is released from the O'Shaughnessy Dam, the Tuolumne River meets many tributaries like the South Fork, Clavey and even **Cherry Creek**, another popular stream for rafting.

Cherry Creek brings in visitors for the legendary **whitewater rafting experience**. While Yosemite National Park receives more than **3 million recreational** visits each year, some come to see the **Tuolumne River** and enjoy the whitewater rafting!<sup>1</sup> Since the 1960s, adventure seekers have enjoyed the **Class IV+ rapids** on the Tuolumne River, which culminates at **Lake Don Pedro**.<sup>2</sup> The **dams play a large role** in water recreation down the river, especially in the **dry season** (late summer and fall). This is what we call **the bubble of the Tuolumne River!**

**The Bubble** is slang, meaning the release of water from upstream dams for rafting. It allows for the continuation of fun down the river as the water level rises due to the **increased flow**. Before anthropogenic intervention, the Tuolumne River is said to have averaged over 2,550 ft<sup>3</sup>/s.<sup>3</sup> Today, **recreational flows** are scheduled from the upstream reservoirs to allow **the Bubble** to come downstream. These **higher flows** are determined based on **hydropower** and are driven by **energy costs**. While energy is created, get energized to raft down **THE BUBBLE OF THE TUOLUMNE RIVER!**

### References

1. Mount et al. *Confluence: A Natural and Human History of the Tuolumne River Watershed*. vol. 1 (Department of Geology and Center for Watershed Sciences University of California Davis, California 95616).
2. Tuolumne-Rivers.com. Whitewater Rafting on the Tuolumne River. <https://www.tuolumne-river.com/tuolumne.htm>.
3. San Francisco Planning. 5.3 Tuolumne River System and Downstream Water Bodies. [https://sfplanning.s3.amazonaws.com/archives/documents/7941-2005.0159E\\_vol3\\_sec5-3\\_wsip\\_finalpeir.pdf](https://sfplanning.s3.amazonaws.com/archives/documents/7941-2005.0159E_vol3_sec5-3_wsip_finalpeir.pdf).

