

New Rapid in Glen Canyon

On March 8th, 2005, Albert Reichert, John Dohrenwend and John Weisheit did a photographic and GPS reconnaissance of Glen Canyon below Hite Marina. Lake Powell has been greatly diminished in size due to the effects of sustained drought and unrelenting water consumption by farms and cities. The Colorado River now flows freely on top of its sediment deposits, which have been accumulating in Lake Powell reservoir since 1963. These sediment deposits on the Colorado River are currently 35 miles in length, and can be found in lower Cataract, Narrow and upper Glen canyons. The sediment deposits end about five miles below the now defunct marina at Hite.

Since the sediment deposits have buried bedrock formations, such as the divides between side canyons and the flat benches that were once canyon rims, the Colorado River, as it cuts down into the soft sediment, eventually strikes a bedrock formation of old and a rapid is soon created. As the reservoir continues the drop and the Colorado River continues to chew the sediment away, the rapid will become quite steep and eventually forms a waterfall.

Such an occurrence happened on the San Juan River during the drought from 1987 to 1992. That waterfall had a drop of 35 feet by 1993. Another waterfall has since emerged on the San Juan River, but at a different location downstream.

The new Glen Canyon rapid, as photographed below, is between North Canyon and Farley Canyon.







