



The Bujagali Dam Update

One of the most common emails received at the Kayak the Nile office is an update on the Bujagali Dam. It seems Chinese whispers have taken off in the kayaking World and I wanted to write this small article to put all the rumors to rest.

Last week the Kayak the Nile team sat down with Bujagali Energy Limited, the company running the development of the dam. We have had meetings with BEL every month for the past two years. This company offers the only genuine information available on the Nile. Anything else you have heard is just hearsay.

The section of the Nile most popular for kayaking covers over 80kms of World class white water. When the new Bujagali dam is implemented we will lose just 8kms of White water or 10%. This is a tragic loss, as we do lose some World class rapids but really not the end of the River Nile. Unfortunately but understandably the Nations power needs and economic development come before kayaker's requirements.

The new dam will be commissioned in June next year but this December 2010 some of the water will be diverted so work can begin on the Silverback channel. This will give restricted access to silverback rapid from December 2010/ January 2011. Between December 2010 and June 2011 we will still have access to Bujagali falls and all the back channels.

Bujagali energy gave these dates to give us an idea of the time scale but as we have learned before the chances are things will be delayed further. The whole project is currently over 2 years behind schedule and due to a number of technical problems typical of this project since day 1, it is possible that things could be delayed further.

On completion of the dam in June 2011 we have been informed that due to new diversion techniques and constant demands from the Egyptian government (Egypt still controls the headwaters of the Nile), we will have a minimum of 1200 cumecs released from the new dam. The current levels are on 700- 900 cumecs. This is good news for kayakers as means the rest of the river below silverback rapid will be running on high water. Nile Special will be running at high levels and Malalu should start running again.



So to summarize rapids we will lose

Bujagali Falls/Blade runner/ Widow Maker/ Escape Hatch

50/50

Total Gunga

Silverback

Rapids that will remain on high water flows

Overtime

Dead Dutchman

Retrospect

Bubugo/ Super hole

Itanda/ Kalagala/ Hypoxia

Vengeance/ Novacaine

Hair of the Dog

Kulu shaker

Nile Special

Malalu



In addition there are a huge number of class two, three and four rapids that will remain on top of the above list. This will mean the Nile will still have plenty to offer the advanced river runner/ freestyler or beginner and Intermediates just starting out in the sport.

This means that this is by no means the end of the Nile and we will have World class white water for many years to come.

Explorers camp/Kayak the Nile and Adrift are all staying on their bases and will not move downstream. Nile River Explorers will be working on a second base in conjunction with the Hairy Lemon. Rafting will start at Overtime and finish at Nile Special, and the current shuttle time from Explorers camp to Overtime is around 20 minutes. New investment in touring kayaks/ motorboats and jet boats will mean the new lake that will form below explorers camp will have plenty of options for additional activities.

Explorers camp is currently going through a huge revamp and upgrade and offers the best location for kayakers to stay.

I hope this helps put to rest some of the rumors flying around and I will be sure to keep everyone posted after our next meeting with BEL

Safe paddling and hopefully see you back on the Nile sometime soon

Jamie and the Kayak the Nile team.