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I have spent more and more time reading the USGS streamflow/cubic feet per second figures for my local waters and have slowly come to realize that I'm not really well-educated in this regard. I see a number for a given stream one day and can tell if it's had major runoff or heavy rain causing a sudden spike, but that's about it. I have no idea what else I can glean from the figures seasonally or how to tell if now is a good time to fish other than "it shouldn't be blown out because there was no major precip or snow runoff."

A lot of people I hear around here and elsewhere can tell that a particular stream is getting good because it's a "X" cfs. I simply have no clue what the logic behind their reasoning is, merely trusting that they know what they're talking about from past experience. I presume it's a relative thing that varies significantly from stream to stream, of course.

How can I make the graphs and the number they present more useful to me? I figure that there has to be more to it than that.