

Manistee River Currents

From The Banks At Chippewa Landing



Newsletter #16

Summer is really here now and Chippewa Landing is in full swing. Your host and owner, Rick Walsh, is busy with the livery and has asked me to give you all an update from The Landing. The weather was just perfect this past Fathers Day weekend and most of the campsites were filled up. I woke up Saturday morning from the Shady Corner campsite up to sunshine and temperatures that got up to the mid to upper seventies. Bill Schnitker, longtime member of the dock crew and a favorite driver at Chippewa drove my party up to Missaukee Bridge for the standard day trip. The river was up about 4" above normal for this time of year, pretty clear, and wild purple Iris were blooming all along the banks. I fished much of the day, picking up four small trout before a big one hit my lure just about fifteen minutes upstream from Chippewa Landing. Caught me by surprise and ripped out a bunch of line before I got it under control. Rolling near the surface I could see that I had a nice bronze colored Brown Trout pushing 20". I got it right up to the canoe before it flipped off the line and laughed as it swam away. But hey, I've got lots of stories about the ones that got away. Bill's son, Abe, got himself a 17" Brown the same day on the same stretch of river. All in all, a wonderful day to out on the Manistee.

It was good to see a couple of scout troops last weekend. Bill and I are Eagle Scouts and always enjoy the opportunity to host troops at Chippewa Landing. Troop 90 was camped in the Top Corner site and had a good group of new youngsters going down the river. With the experience gained from this trip, it would be nice to see them camping along the river next year.

Five Troops from Indiana met at Chippewa Landing where they were shuttled up river then made a long 65 mile trip from CCC Bridge to Chippewa Landing. Only a well organized group could complete that journey like they did in just two days.

They spent a couple extra days at The Landing working on several projects for the campground including building Wood Duck houses, constructing a dock for the Island campsite (see pic), and carving an impressive totem pole that will be erected in the future. I attended a portion of their last campfire Friday night and was moved by the stories and lessons imparted there. The Roll Call of the brave boys from Company B and C is a campfire experience that I will not soon forget. Thank you from me and all of the Chippewa Landing Staff for reminding us of all the best that Scouting has to offer.

I'll be back at Chippewa Landing next week for my annual five day four night trip from CCC Bridge with my buddy Rob and his son Robbie. Robbie is twenty now and has been making this trip with us since he was eight. We paddle at a leisurely pace for four days and spend an extra day at one of the nice campsites. Canoe camping is one of my favorite pastimes. The Manistee River has vast stretches of state land for you to camp on. Did you ever take that day trip from Rainbow Jim or Missaukee Bridges and wish you could spend more time on the river? I often turn those into two day trips by carrying my gear in the canoe and camping at a half way point. You can have a prime riverside campsite all to yourself like the one below. It gives me the time to drift slowly, fish, stop often, and have a nice shore lunch. You can explore sections of the river that very few canoeists ever see. It is not uncommon at all for us to spot eagles, deer, beavers and other wildlife along these stretches. Once, drifting quietly down from Sharon Bridge, I rounded a bend and suddenly came upon a Bald Eagle standing on the riverbank no more than thirty feet from my canoe. I held my breathe as it slowly took flight. What a sight! I've never taken a group canoe camping down the river that hasn't come back to do it again. More details on canoe camping in another newsletter. Hope to See You on the River, Roland Neynaber

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