

## Spring Fling 2006

A fleet of ten hit the water at 9:30 Saturday morning from Interstate State Park in Taylor Falls. The sun was bright and the temps were rising nicely in what was proving to be a gorgeous spring day. Although the canoes were lined up three and four deep at the boat launch, we seemed to beat most other boaters onto the water. Apparently in shock from the on-time departure, we failed to go upstream initially for the large bluff views, but instead started down river immediately.

After passing some picturesque bluffs, Dave Christianson “led” us into the back waters on the Wisconsin side of the river. The water was calm and the landscape included every shade of green imaginable. We meandered and wound through the channel, ducked under the occasional downed tree and even spotted a decent size waterfall in the distant. The water was plenty high allowing for easy passage. We emerged onto a larger lake area after passing a few fishermen setting up brunch in what looked to be an ideal camping spot. After a bit of searching and a golden eagle sighting, we were able to find the access out onto the main river route again.

Two hours of leisurely paddling later, we arrived in Osceola, making a lunch stop at the Minnesota state park. Brendan left the group to paddle back up river to his car, needing an early departure. As we were finishing lunch, the young canoeists started to arrive. Not wanting to be responsible for any pending capsizes, we launched back onto the water.

The afternoon brought clouds and a soft rain. Given the mild temps at about 60 degrees, it was still a pleasant paddle. We passed the rookery in the backwaters on the Minnesota side of the river as evident from the noise, although there were no visible signs of the birds. Running with the water, we made good time to William O’Brien, arriving just before 2:00.

We were greeted at the landing by Richard Tovsen who opted for recumbent biking over kayaking for the day. As vehicles were shuttled back from Taylor Falls, Bill O’Conner – newly dubbed SKOAC support team & head chef – arrived and set to arranging a feast of a picnic in one of the shelters, complete with table cloth, portable charcoal grill and sliced limes for beverages. The potluck continues SKOACs tradition of nothing but the finest of foods ... grilled brats, fruit salad, crab cakes, guacamole, green salad, Greek salad ... this is a club that knows how to eat!

Although most members left for the night, the women on the trip all stayed to camp. Richard stayed on as the token male of the group until the campground curfew. He was a brave man and withstood our good-natured harassment quite easily.

After a leisurely morning that included large quantities of coffee and a fabulous fire, the ladies packed camp and headed out, happy to have had a night of camping, eager to be planning the next trip.