

Tales of Water Trails: Crow River – North Fork

Welcome to 'Tales of Water Trails' presented by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Our guests, Lynne and Bob Diebel, are experienced canoeists and kayakers who have paddled more than 2,400 miles of Minnesota water trails. They describe these routes for other travelers in their two books, *Paddling Northern Minnesota* and *Paddling Southern Minnesota*.

For this series of programs, the Diebels are sharing their insights about Minnesota's state water trails. The Minnesota DNR manages over 4,000 miles of water trails for canoeing and kayaking including the north shore of Lake Superior and dozens of rivers statewide.

Here are Lynne Diebel and Bob Diebel, talking about paddling on the North Fork of the Crow River.

Lynne:

On the North Fork of the Crow, we like two different segments. The first is pretty far upstream, from Highway 22 to Kingston, and that runs through Forest City. And the second is right down by the confluence of the Mississippi, and that's from Lake Rebecca Park – which is actually on the South Fork – down to the Mississippi. On the further upstream segment, paddlers will find farmland and woods and a surprising amount of wildlife along those upper reaches. Closer to the Mississippi the riverbanks are more developed in many areas. The first trip is about 23 miles long and the second one from Lake Rebecca Park to the Mississippi is just about 27 miles. These are best for day paddlers. There is camping around Forest City, but this is really best paddled as a day trip.

Bob:

Lynne mentioned the lower part is more of an urban paddle, and that reminds me that I often look at these river segments that we've paddled and remember some of the details other than just paddling down, such as getting there and the shuttles. On the lower part, we had a very unique shuttle experience because I took a cab. I didn't want to ride my bike through some of the very busy highways in that area so we called a cab and he was kind of mystified as to what we were doing, but he took me back to the car.

There was another experience in Minneapolis after paddling Minnehaha Creek where I called a cab and had given my location as an intersection of two streets, and the cab didn't come. I called again and again, and finally the cab driver came. He said that if you call a cab, "don't give the intersection of two streets as your location because we have a lot of trouble with people who don't have an address." And

so this is another tip for canoeists: if you ever use a cab, just look at a house number really near where you're at, and give that as your pickup point.

Lynne:

Back to the North Fork of the Crow, we recommend for a woodsy experience Highway 22 to Kingston. For a little more of an urban paddle, and a very pleasant paddle, Lake Rebecca Park to the Mississippi. You're going to meet a few riffles along the way on both of them, and deadfalls particularly on the upper segment. Those snags need a lot of care to get around, or under, or over. High water can be a problem because there are a couple of low bridges upstream of Forest City. Otherwise this is a great trip for beginning river paddlers and for families.

I wish you happy paddling.