

Tales of Water Trails: Pomme de Terre River

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 Pomme de Terre River.

Lynne:

A classic prairie river, the Pomme de Terre flows down a mostly wooded corridor surrounded by farmland as it drops into the Minnesota River Valley. The dam that once impounded the Pomme de Terre at Appleton was removed in 1999. When we paddled this river we found out that locals call it the "Pomme de Terror," because of the strainers that are downstream of Appleton, so you'll want to be ready for those strainers! The stretch we liked best was about 20 miles long, between Highway 12 and Marsh Lake on the Minnesota.

Bob:

When you start out by Highway 12 you go through some wooded banks and then it very rapidly opens out into some farmland, very open farmland, that has big center pivot irrigators right next to the river. The day we paddled it, it was kind of amusing to watch the irrigation equipment irrigating the river. And so we actually got a little shower as we were paddling down the river. But it changes its character again very quickly into a very twisty and deadfall laden stretch right above Appleton, and then picks up the pace a bit as it goes through some more challenging paddling as it approaches Marsh Lake, which is part of the dammed-up Minnesota.

Lynne:

You'll find riffles between Appleton and the Lac qui Parle Wildlife Management Area, which is about four and a half miles downstream of Appleton. Those riffles and class I rapids are a lot fun. It's a really pretty stretch. When you get into the wildlife management area the river flattens out, hits the bottom of the Minnesota River Valley. The snags can be a problem along there. If the water level is high, the

current's going to be strong and you need to have good boat management skills to handle this area. If the water level's moderate, you'll still need to drag around a few of the snags, as they tend to block the stream.

The wildlife, of course, likes the wildlife management area and we saw some really nice snapping turtles. We also saw owls and bald eagles and cormorants, lots and lots of songbirds, kingfishers, swallows. This is a very pretty river. "Pomme de Terror" only if you choose the wrong time to paddle it.

Bob:

This river is out in the southwest corner of the state, and part of that group of rivers that is well worth considering taking a trip out to that corner of the state to explore. So good paddling.

Lynne:

If you paddle all six of the "Prairie Rivers," which is what the Clean Up the River Environment group in Montevideo calls them, you can get a Prairie River Paddlers Patch for your lifejacket.

Bob:

Do I have to prove this?

Lynne:

They'll take your word for it.

Bob:

OK. Have fun!