

Tales of Water Trails: Rum 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 Rum River.

Lynne:

The 145-mile Rum River is fed by huge Mille Lacs Lake. The Rum can be divided into three distinct sections: The Upper Rum, fast and lively, is the first to suffer when the water supply is low. The Middle Rum is generally plagued with deadfalls, and up until recently was not worth traveling unless you were a mosquito. However, that project of cleaning up some of the deadfalls is being addressed and the Minnesota Conservation Corps is going to clear a path through that Middle Rum, it's a flatter stretch of river. The Lower Rum is lively like the upper, it's a little deeper and so it's almost always passable.

The stretch that we liked best, and that doesn't include the Middle Rum, amounts to about 82 miles of the 145. The Rum is a state "wild and scenic" river. It's really got a beautiful stretch in the upper and the lower, and it sounds like that middle section is on its way to being improved.

Bob:

It's funny to think that over a hundred years ago when the logging was being done in Minnesota, that the Rum would have been probably a lot more paddleable than it is right now because the logs would have busted out all those deadfalls in that area. But the DNR is evidently going to be cleaning that out so it will be a good paddle all the way along its length.

Lynne:

On the Upper Rum there are class I rapids, which can be just a lot of fun. There is one class II rapids at high water, so depending on the water levels you'll want to be able to be comfortable in class II, because there isn't a portage around it.

Bob:

Bradbury Rapids is the name of it, and it did surprise us. We had consulted other sources of information on all the paddling that we did prior to doing research for our book, and we didn't expect it to be quite as big as it was. So it's something to watch out for if you're not an experienced whitewater paddler. You might want to stop and take a look at it before going through it.

Lynne:

And that's primarily when the water's high. It's a little more sedate when the water's lower. Otherwise, this is a great river for beginning river paddlers, especially on the Lower Rum. You can do a nice day trip, but many people like to paddle all the way from big Mille Lacs down to Anoka and do the whole Rum.

Fishermen will be happy to know that smallmouth bass are plentiful on the Upper Rum. The walleye and some smallmouth bass on the Lower.

Bob:

And down by the Twin Cities, of course, in the Lower Rum there's a lot more paddlers who come out of the Cities for a day paddle, and there's some outfitters and canoe rental places that you can rent a boat from.

So in summary, this river has a lot to offer and we urge you to get out there and try it.