

WATER TRIP SUMMARY – CHIPPEWA RIVER (reported by Snyder/Lombardo)

Date(s):	Sunday, May 7, 2023	Distance:	19.08 miles
Location:	Chippewa River, Caryville, WI (Holte's Landing) to Durand, WI (Hubbard's Landing)	Time:	~3 Hours
Weather:	Partly cloudy, 68-74F, SW winds - calm to 10 mph, low humidity.	Discharge:	17,000 cfs (Grand Ave Bridge Eau Claire) 21,900 cfs (Durand, WI)
River Temp:	50F	Gage Height:	9.38 feet (Grand Ave. Bridge, Eau Claire)
River Conditions:	Mostly flat, a few ripples near Meridean, some rolls and boils. Increased rolls, boils, and eddies near bike bridge/ former railroad bridge to confluence with Red Cedar River and on curve near Hubbard's Landing.	Turbidity:	Though dark brown from tannins, the river is not turbid. After confluence with Red Cedar, color was a little less dark brown.
Other:	No floating logs or debris in the river. Some trash and fallen trees/logs along shoreline. Logs and trees jammed on bike bridge piers—be smart and safe.	Current (est., if applicable):	About 10-15 mph

Wildlife / Nature Notes: Eagles and nesting eagles—we counted about 15 eagles. There were several egrets, pelicans, mallards, wood ducks, black birds and birds singing but we couldn't see. Trees closer to river were just beginning to bud, and trees further from the river were further along. Few trees were tipped over or angled from spring flooding. Water levels appear are about 10 feet lower than 2 weeks ago. Flooding has caused some land erosion and soil slump. The bluffs and high topographic areas were a nice contrast to the low-lying lands and Dunnsville Bottoms and Nine Mile wildlife areas.

Trip Notes:



Typical conditions of Chippewa River for this trip (near Meridean).

Interesting tidbit - The Town of Peru is sometimes labeled on maps as Meridean. These days the communities of Meridean and Red Cedar and the ghost towns of Old Tyrone and Old Meridean are in the Town of Peru. Just in case you're looking at one map then another, there may be some confusion.

In late April 2023, we were unable to get to many points on the Chippewa River due to flooding (discharge at that time was about 3X higher than 7 May 2023). Happy to report that boat landings, rustic boat landings and adjacent lands were accessible. Some low-elevation islands were still under water but most of the river is back within its banks with sand bars returning to view. The river is still cold and can cause hypothermia—so be smart.

The trip was exciting, and conditions were, in our opinion, pretty excellent! A nice clip to the river—we averaged ~10.5-minute miles. We saw several people on the shoreline along the way who were watching the river and us—everyone looked happy. No other boaters except for an airboat buzzing back and forth near Hubbard's Landing. Plenty of birds and nesting eagles.

We mostly stuck to the main channel along the Meridean Slough and the side routes in the slough looked navigable. For the two times we took a side channel, no issues with bottoming out or snags. The RV and campsite just north of Meridean, or where the Meridean Slough rejoins with the Chippewa River, had several RVs already settled in and enjoying the day. A teaser—on river right near Meridean, one must come up with stories about that 1940s car.

Old Tyrone Landing, on an outside turn river left was approachable with a grassy takeout area.

A couple spots had a current increase as the river width got narrower (no problem). Be mindful as you approach the bike trail bridge (former railroad bridge) and confluence with the Red River area. There are currently several logs/trees snagged on the inner piers of the bridge which forced us to take the outer bend of the river and the river speed was vastly increased. Once around the bridge piers, there were more volatile boils, undercurrents, and eddies. The eddies were 5-10 feet in diameter—enough to turn a boat. The boils continued until after the Red Cedar (1/2 mile or so). Then it was back to enjoyable paddling.

Hubbard's Landing, also on an outside turn river left, had those increased river speeds with plenty of boils and twirls. The forward and downriver speed was amazing, and we thought we might rocket past the landing. Then we hit the backward undercurrent which almost brought us to a full stop—we had to paddle hard to get through the backward undercurrent. Once past the confused water, the water became relatively slack. The water levels at the landing were high enough there was no landing, and we had to maneuver the kayaks between small trees and onto the landing's steps.



Approach to Hubbard's Landing.