

EACH TURN OF THE BLACK RIVER OFFERS SCENERY LACED WITH BEAUTY & HISTORY

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The hurrier I go behinder I get. I have been retired for seven years, but wonder how I ever had time for steady job. I never seem to have time for the important things in life. This past week I finally did something about it.

Fellow curmudgeon Jack Foster and I have been sparring with each other all spring and summer about going fishing. The day and time were set and with boat, motor and enough tackle in tow for an army, we called each other's bluff. Six a.m. found us with bitter look in our eyes heading for the Black River.

As we wended our way down the Moose River Road, we speculated about the black cloud we both claim haunts us. Apprehensive looks at the sky and radio weather reports did nothing to dispel our fears. They were confirmed when we arrived at the boat-launching site below Lowville.

Jack discovered the four-wheel drive was not working in his truck and I noticed one of the tires on the boat trailer was flat. He did not have a spare tire or wrench to fit the lug nuts, but we decided to fish and worry about it when we got through. As hard as it is for me to believe, that was the only bad luck we had the rest of the day.

It was all down hill after that and we had a great trip. We caught walleyes, smallmouths, frost fish and even a huge bullhead on a leadhead jig. The day turned out to be great weather-wise as well.

The Black River essentially flows from North Lake at Atwell to Dexter, and boasts no less than 12 public boat-launching sites and several other access sites. The fishing runs the gambit from brook trout to carp, with everything in between.

I have fished it in several locations with varying degrees of luck, but this particular day was the best I ever experienced. The section we fished was on neither of us had ever fished before. The fishing is only one inducement for visiting the lower end of the river from Lyons Falls to Dexter.

It has some of the most eminently navigable stretches between access points for canoeing, kayaking or boating. The meandering current and varying scenes beckon the

traveler onward to see what's around the constant bends and turns. One does not have to qualify as a whitewater expert to safely traverse it, either.

Old evidence such as pilings and stone abutments that played a role in its commercialization in bygone days intrigue the imagination. Scenes of farm activity and daily riverbank activities further enhance the trip. Several types of wildlife and their work, dens and presence are an added bonus.

Combine all of the above with several excellent stops to stretch your legs and enjoy lunch and I can think of no better way to spend the day. We never encountered another boat all day.

The day ended with both of us fished out. After a short trip to get the trailer tire repaired while I waited with the boat, we were on our way home. We arrived in plenty of time for supper, after which I cleaned and filleted our catch with the grandsons. The following evening they helped cook and eat the end results with enough left over for another meal.

Not all of my fishing or other trips end this pleasantly, but enough so that I am scheming already to go again. I hope on the next trip to visit a new location and to include my grandsons.

I hope that my discourse on the qualifications and ready availability of this local resource will encourage others to explore it. It's greatest potential may well be in pursuits other than fishing. I discovered that one beautiful fall day last year when wife Nancy and granddaughter Cindy and I traveled from Glenfield to Beaches Bridge. The only thing that marred the trip was the drain plug working loose.