

## **IF YOU HUNT, FISH OR TRAP YOU KNOW OF TORTURE TRIPS**

**07/18/00**

Unless you are a dedicated hunter, fisherman or trapper, you may not know what a true “torture trip” is. We have all been on outings where our pleasure was mitigated by hardships both physical and mental. I have had more than I care to remember, but none in magnitude to approach those in my outdoor pursuits.

I credit my father with coining the phrase “torture trip.” I was very young and possessed a much greater vim and vigor for those activities than I do today. It came about in response to my pleadings to forsake the warmth and comfort of our little Tug Hill hunting camp to hunt or fish in what were obviously adverse weather conditions. He dampened my ardor by proclaiming, “I am not going to torture myself.”

There are many factors that escalate an ordinary outing into a torture trip. Weather is undoubtedly the prime contributor to qualify an excursion as a torture trip. In any event, all of them combined over a space of many years have convinced Dad was correct in calling them torture trips. One thing most have in common is that they are long remembered after more pleasant junkets are forgotten.

Most of the more memorable ones are with our best friends. Mike Morgan was one of my best and we made a real noteworthy expedition after brook trout that qualifies as a classic.

Years ago the fishing was good on the lower reaches of Bear Creek below Woodgate. We theorized it would be a lot better way up toward Granny Marsh on a large impoundment portrayed on the USGA map.

A small aluminum boat took us upstream a fair step and we continued on by foot reaching the ever-beckoning pond about dusk. Naturally, there was no pond to be found or hardly any creek at that point. It was hot, stifling weather and the black flies and mosquitoes were also. A smudge kept them at bay until we prepared to sleep. I was sweltering totally covered in our sleeping bags. Any attempt to get a breath of air was met by an onslaught of mosquitoes the size of hen turkeys.

Mick bellowed out after what seemed an eternity asking to know the time and threatening to kill himself if dawn wasn't at hand. I well remember his anguished cries

and curses when I informed him it was only midnight. We lived until daylight, but barely.

Raquette Lake friend Morgan Roderick was a frequent participant with Mick and me. I recall one outstanding debacle on the upper reaches of the Oswegatchie River above High Falls.

The Robinson River runs into the Oswegatchie and that was our destination. It was a replay of the Granny Marsh fiasco. The walk was about 10 times further, though.

Morgan and I were talking about some of our more outstanding jaunts and he recounted one he and Raquette native Jerry Lamphear made. Herm Helms flew them into Whitney Lake for some lake trout fishing. It was a beautiful bluebird day right up until Herm left in the plane.

Jerry caught a nice, big fish right off the bat and it looked like a promising event until they happened to look off toward the west. There was no question that some bad weather was headed their way and fast.

It started to snow and blow and they spent the next 13 hours in their sleeping bags on the porch of a camp on the lakeshore. Needless to say, they were thankful to see the plane coming back in after the storm clearing.

A duck-hunting trip Morgan and I took spawned a cliché we use to this day. We left our vehicle early on our way in to hunt some beaver ponds some distance back in the woods. Never having hunted there before, he asked if we needed to bring our lunch along. I told him, “No need to bring the lunches, we will not be gone long.”

Long hours later we literally stumbled back to our vehicle exhausted and starving.