

Annual Wildflower Trip on the St. Croix River

From Linda Pascoe
April 17, 2016

11 ISKers spent the day on the St. Croix River Sunday, April 17, to hunt for early-blooming wildflowers and to check out the Great Blue Heron rookery.



Our launch site was on the Minnesota side of the Osceola bridge. We paddled south to the swing bridge where we had lunch, and then returned via a few miles on the main river before entering the backwaters in hopes of a 'lighter' current.

Our pre-launch talk focused on the fact we'd be paddling down current first, and this meant we'd be coming up the river on our return, a bit of wind to our back. We anticipated an 8 – 9 mile trip, and we finished at 9.5 miles...4 hours, including a lunch break and plenty of time to take photos and watch herons, vultures & a handful of swallows.



It was a very warm day, reaching 80 degrees (average 54). Nary a drysuit in sight. And just a handful of wildflowers...well, Marsh Marigolds only, but there were plenty of them. There was a lot of activity at the rookery...nests are being groomed for this season's clutch.

We encountered no problems - unless you count the occasional 'bump' of wood-under-water or a shallow sand dune greeting the kayak. Everyone was in great spirits when we finished and admittedly with current and heat, we were a bit on the tired side.

This river has a mind of its own and you never know what's around the bend – and that's why this early spring encounter is fun whether you paddled it for the first time or the hundredth. You never get tired of it.

