

**NEWPORT RIVER (NINE MILE RD BRIDGE TO OLD 70 IN
NEWPORT) 10/18/03**

Four adventure hungry souls met at the Nine Mile road bridge at 9 A.M. on this grey, breezy, chilly day. They were Elmer Eddy, Marie Justen, Matt Haynes and myself,(Gary Scruggs).

After lowering our boats and gear over the side of the bridge and doing the shuttle bit,etc., we loaded up and headed out at 0945. The river was still up but was in its banks at this point. It was a beautiful fall day despite the chill in the air and the gray skies. The river is a typical coastal river being dark in color and moving right along, not too fast, not too slow, just right for a nice easy paddle. We proceeded along picking up pieces of trash here and there for a couple of hundred feet till we came into blow-down country, the start of the challenging and somewhat arduous section of the trip. There were numerous (as in we lost count) blowdowns, scoot -overs, hump-overs, pull-overs, squeeze-unders, go-arounds and cut-throughs,plus a few portages. ARGH!! Obviously, this slowed our progress noticeably, and added to the length of time of our trip.

On one particular pull-over, I decided I'd would rather cut a trail around than try the pull-over. Matt being much younger, more agile and all-that crap, decided to pull-over. I was about half-way through the portage part when Marie,who had decided to follow Matt, figured it was a nice day for a swim. So she did go swimming! She was trying to get out of her kayak and onto the tree when the kayak decided it was going to move leaving Marie between the tree and her kayak. Fortunately, nobody had there cameras out. Marie quickly gave us a water temperature report and explicit instructions as to how quickly we should get her out of the water.

This part of the river is beautiful even though littered with blowdowns, not much man trash was seen. This is not a trip for the beginner or those looking for a nice easy sunday afternoon paddle.

We worked our way through this maze until around noon when we came upon four trees laying one on top of the other and decided this was a good place to take out and have lunch. Be sure to take out on the left bank here. It is a fairly high bank about 2' at this water level and a minor difficulty exit. However there is a dirt road and dry ground where we enjoyed our lunch. This is on someone's property, We did not see any posted signs but made sure we left it cleaner than we found it. Matt and I decided to do a little downriver scouting. Much to our susprise we found out that we were on a peninsula so we portaged across about 100' and re-launched.

The Newport River does a lot of twisting and turning through here and sometimes you good look through the trees and see your paddling buddy going the opposite way you were heading.

Finally we came upon a shack that someone had built on the banks of the river. My son and I had paddled around this shack on an up-river exploration last week during high water. It was really comforting to see familiar territory again.

From here on down there were not quite as many blow-downs. We stopped briefly to have a short stretch at Herman Godwin's pic-nic table (thank You Mr. Godwin!).

After our break we proceeded down-river and found where some good samaritan had cut a path through a rather large blowdown (Thank You MR. Good Samaritan!).

After that it was pretty much smooth paddling, the river widened out and obstructions were such as you could paddle around them.

The flora and fauna was abundant. We saw two deer, two wild turkeys a barred owl and numerous small birds and animals. As we paddled on downstream we observed some white orchid-like flowers in bloom on one stretch, then the water-lillies were in bloom a little further down-stream with there small, white daisy-like blossoms waving in the breeze. In one cove there were masses of bright yellow Daisies clustered among the water lillies. It was really breath-taking.

We finally got to the take-out at the wildlife ramp on old 70 in Newport 6 hours and 45 minutes later. Four tired , frazzled,paddlers. (One wet & cold.)

As for me, I stretched out on the nice warm ground and rested (and guarded the boats and equipment) while Marie, took Elmer and Matt to get their vehicles. All in all it was a great trip, the last part seeming longer than the first. This trip may not be for the beginning adventurer, but it certainly is well -worth doing.

Gary