

Salut,

How are you all doing this winter? Can you believe how quickly 2023 passed by us? There is little doubt how true it is that time flies. 2023 however, was a great year, and we had plenty of adventures over the course of the past 12 months. Hunting, fishing and canoeing some great rivers and backwaters around the state of Michigan, and a few as far west as Montana! We will tell you about 2023 and the Voyagers but allow us to share a few things concerning our canoe trips. Voyagers Canoe Trips started 12 years ago with a plan to help plant seeds in our young men's lives in hopes they will eventually take root and assist in their navigating the ups and downs of everyday life. Looking back over the past trips, we still believe our efforts were worthwhile, and continue to look ahead to more Voyagers trips.

What can you do for the Voyagers? May we encourage you all to share this newsletter for a start. This newsletter, or rather travelogue, is put together 3-4 times annually, covering our events, sharing pictures and thoughts as well as articles of significance, history, conservation,

and adventure. The basis for this is to create something that shines the light on every one of our travelers, as well as something for those at home. We would love to print this entire publication for you, but unfortunately this is still not a reality, though you can read it on your PC, laptop or phone anywhere you go. If possible, print a copy off and share it with others in the family, maybe even those who are shut ins, living in an assisted living home – for example. Either way, please share this with others, and continue the word-of-mouth marketing that has brought more than 265 youths through our program.

Knowing the why. Knowing what you can do matters, but knowing the why helps to reinforce our support for programs that provide opportunities for the youth. The why stems from our desire to instill in our young men the thoughts, ideals and manner of thinking needed in becoming a man. In a world that moves as quickly as ours, it is of great importance to teach, encourage, protect and provide for the next generation. Values, etiquette, virtues and morals – good for sound teaching have the potential to sink into the mind, and serve as the basis for making sound decisions as we go through life. This is the ‘why’. In addition, we know that the many pithy maxims shared with those young men on a trip or what we teach about the essentials of survival, such as knowing what items are a must when in the big woods, really do become important things they will remember. One of my favorites is, if you’re knifeless, your lifeless. Very true in a survival situation.

Thank you.

In this issue:

- **Seeds (A Poem)**
- Up Coming Canoe Trips 2024
- **Sponsorship Importance**
- Awards and how to earn them.
- **Voyagers Badges – Earning your badge after three trips with the Voyagers**
- Paddle of the Century – Story of Don Starkell
- **The Ol’ Camp Kitchen – another great recipe to try at home**
- 2023 Father/Daughter Canoe Trip
- **Fly Fishing Trip**
- Voyagers Fall Canoe Trip

SEEDS

A gardener, if he's very wise,
When it is planting season,
Will always use the best of seeds.
It only stands to reason.

Because he knows when harvest comes
He'll reap what he has sown.
If he's been careful, he'll be proud
Of all that he has grown.

It makes me realize that words
Are very much like seeds.
People use all kinds of them
That seem to fit their needs.

But, unlike seeds, the words we speak
Don't stay down in the ground.
More likely in a fertile mind
Is where they will be abound.

Where they are nourished by the thoughts
Of those who seek to find
A way they can express themselves.
The way of all mankind.

Especially fertile is the mind
Of every little one,
So we should be so careful
Before much harm is done.

A child will mimic what he hears
And not give it a thought.
He doesn't even realize
Just what he has been taught

Still, when he's grown, his attitude,
And what he will believe
Will come from words that he has heard
And what his mind received.

If he's been fed on ugly words,
He'll grow up full of hate
For those he thinks are different.
A most unhappy state.

Because that hatred then will spread.
It can go on forever,
With nations hating nations.
Peace, a lost endeavor.

So take care when you are speaking.
Plant words that when they grow,
Will bring forth love and wisdom.
You'll be glad you made it so.

VOYAGERS CANOE TRIPS - 2024

Spring Canoe Trip May 3rd – 5th 2024

Father/Daughter September 27th -29th 2024

Fall Canoe Trip October 25th – 27th 2024

*****All Trips Departure Time: 8:30 AM*****

**Departing from 2663 East M-43 Hwy, Hastings,
Michigan 49058**

RSVP NOW, by clicking HERE

Thank Your Sponsor – Each year sponsors contribute to the Voyagers making what we do possible. In 2023, the Voyagers awarded Fly Rods, Frost River Packs, Custom axes & Stormy Kromer gear. In addition, sponsors have paved the way in getting the Voyagers closer, each year, to achieving our goals of using 100% vintage gear, much of which is pre-1930. The purpose is clear, leveraging the past for the benefit of our future allows us to recognize the many values the old gear provides. The memories of our past outdoor experiences will no doubt play a role in how the next generation plans theirs. Keeping the traditions alive benefits us all.



Sponsorship extras:

Occasionally, we will make a knife for someone, for the purpose of a donation of their choosing. This year Greg Chulski, from Chulski Salt Service was one of those sponsors. We made him a knife, and Greg made a nice donation to the Voyagers of \$300 dollars – a mighty nice donation we might add. Greg has been a long time friend and customer, and if you're needing salt of any kind, it is worth a call to Chulski Salt Service!

Thank you Mr. Salt Man!!!



Earning Awards Through the Voyagers

Since 2012, one of our goals has been to equip our attendees with *quality gear* that will last a lifetime. Handmade, or made in the USA quality gear is something we all value right? But this gear tends to be costly. The Voyagers help to bridge the gap between this gulf because we know that once a young man realizes the quality of an item, they will remember it, and the value it generated in the bush! Whether you're on a canoe trip, a hunt or just hiking through the back country, reliable gear goes the distance, delivering better results all around!

Here is what YOU can do to take one of these great items home.

1. Raise money. Voyagers honor those who contribute.

2. **Apply Yourself.** Voyagers honor virtues, etiquette and morals. Those who apply themselves will go far in earning the respect of Voyager leadership. Wish to know more? Reach out to us, or the website for information that will provide the foundation for those three attributes.
 3. **Character-Relationship-Task.** This is a sure-fire way to earn your way forward with the Voyagers. Yes, this is not easy, but it is beneficial. Learning to be a man of character means standing your ground and doing what is right. Relationship means you get to know all of the party, learning their names, knowing their story. Task, this one is easier said than done. Being on task means you are paying attention to what is needed in camp, on the river or wherever the group has a need. Mastering these items serves to increase your chances on a trip, and in life.
 4. **Competition creates cooperation.** The Voyagers enjoy competitions. Apply yourself here and become our next champ.
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VOYAGERS CANOE TRIPS, THE BADGE



The idea of the Badge, to instill into young men the belief that they could do just about anything if they put their mind to it. The leather Voyagers Badge is earned by making three consecutive trips. The badges are made by hand, tooled and names added, each with a characteristic unique to each young man.

PER ARDUA means ‘Through Difficulties’. This is an old saying which dates back more than a thousand years, originating with the highland clans of Scotland.

In addition to Per Ardua, we added the word LOYALTY. The two words together are stamped into the leather badge in hopes that the motto will remind its owner of whom they are, and in spite of hard times; they will remember to be loyal to Christ. In addition, the Per Ardua is expected to prompt others to ask what it means, which leads to one more way we can introduce the Gospel, and our hope in the return of Christ one day.

Now you know the story behind the badge. We encourage all to work for this badge, and when you earn it, wear it upon your toque, or on your pack!

IN 2024, We are requesting that ALL attendees carry their badges, or wear them. If you have earned this badge, you are eligible for Badge Holders Trips, as well as the prospect of becoming a Guide in Training. Let others know you've earned this badge and wear it to support the Voyagers purpose.

PADDLE OF THE CENTURY



“Knowing my dad the way that I did, his greatest fear was not living life,” he said.

The canoe, it has been with us since Columbus' men awoke to find a small boat being paddled around their ships, remarking what they saw by saying 'CANOA', what we call canoe today. Since this time period, the canoe has been the favored 'go-to' tool for vast expeditions into the far reaches of the known world.

One of the great stories, among thousands, took place on June 1, 1980. Don Starkell and his two sons Dana and Jeff, pushed off from the banks of Winnipeg's Red River in their custom-built canoe named Orellana. The trip would amount to more than 20,000 kilometers, or 12,500 miles. Down the Red River, to the De Bois Sioux, the Minnesota River and into the Mississippi, some 335 miles downstream.

Imagining a 12,000-mile canoe trip may be difficult to do, and pulling one off is not for the faint of heart either. The challenges with weather, currents, navigation hazards and people, even those in your own party all contribute to the challenge.

The story relates how one man started planning with an idea. The research, hours of reading and reviewing old documents, the study of charts, weather patterns and the essentials necessary for making such a trip all come into play.

So why do men like Don do it? There are always reasons for trips such as this.

Canoe heroes such as Ralph Frese, Verlan Kruger and Charlie Walbridge, and many more, all found something in planning a canoe trip, and then doing the impossible. Through successes and failures both, each of them made their mark in history. Our guide Andy Jerue, and his wife Robin paddled to the Arctic down the McKenzie River, through one of the last supreme wildernesses on the planet, and they rode a bicycle 'Around The World'!!!

Two years is what it took for Don Starkell to paddle down to the Amazon River. In some cases, we look at two years as an impossible barrier we cannot cross, while others see it as there is no time like the present. When we are old and gray, I will guarantee something of this degree will serve as a warm and fond memory, an adventure that makes the man. So, perhaps some of will never plan such an event, and maybe some of us will never paddle more than a few hours. Well, it is not about those who do, or those who don't, it is about taking full advantage of the moment, the time you have today to do what matters. I've asked Andy firsthand, and he will tell you, it was worth every minute of the time invested!

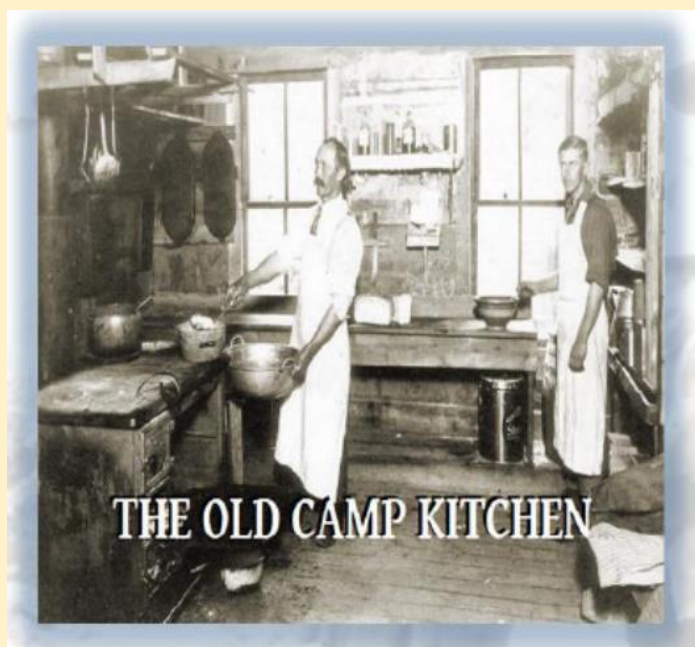
Take time now to dream about what you'd like to see, or where you'd like to go. The world is an amazing place, and the time required to see it all simply does not exist in the life span you and I are given. No matter what it is, choose to go forward, and do what it is you desire – adventure means 'unknown risk', so educate yourself, know



whats expected, and plan for a lifetime of good memories. You will be glad you did!

Note: The Orellana is currently on display at the [Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough, Ont.](#), to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Starkells' journey. Don Starkell died in 2012 at the age of 79, but not before attempting to paddle the Northwest Passage in a kayak in 1990.

Canoe Adventure: Interestingly enough, one of our own Voyager Guides followed the example of adventure, paddling the McKenzie River. Be sure to catch our story in an upcoming Newsletter & Video.



In our Summer Newsletter, we listed the following recipe. The first one to make this recipe, and get a picture of it being served will win a Gift Certificate to Al & Pete's Sporting Goods Store. This will be a \$25.00 Value. Limited to first 2 weeks from the date this Newsletter is sent out. Picture Must Be Clear – Sent to dboerema@unitedterminals.us

'CAST IRON FRENCH TOAST'

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla
- Just a hint of Cinnamon / nutmeg
- 1 loaf bread (Rye-Sour Dough)
- Real Salted Butter 'for the pan'

In a large shallow dish, beat the eggs until uniform. Add milk, sugar, vanilla, and spices beat until mixed. Heat your trusty cast-iron skillet over an even layer of campfire coals till pipin hot! Dip a slice of bread in the egg mixture and let er soak... then sprinkle with a little extra sugar. Melt the butter in the skillet and add the bread. Cook until golden brown and crisp, about 2.5 minutes per side. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.



Recap – Father/Daughter Canoe Trip 2023

It is difficult to believe we had our fourth Father/Daughter canoe trip this past September! Time surely does fly doesn't it? Where does it go, we sometimes wonder when we consider how our children grow so fast, the years passing by like a rocket. Of course, this is one of the reasons we love this trip so much.

The Father/Daughter trip is a time to get out into the back country, along one of our northern rivers and enjoy one on one time together. There are so many reasons why this is a good idea, and something to consider if you're thinking about spending more time with your daughter. Or, maybe you are a daughter wishing to attend with your Father or Grandfather.

Any way you slice it, this September trip is a great time. Not too hot, and not too cold. By late September the skeeters and black flies are long gone, barring some die-hards when temps remain high, and the evenings are cool enough for a wool sweater.

Weather was nice in 2023, and we left with five Fathers and 10 Daughters around 8:30 am Friday morning. The drive north, filled with a pitstop of two, usually has us arriving around 11:30 am to our launch destination, which in this case, was Borchers in Grayling. We pulled in, unloaded, carried gear and canoes to the waterfront where we took our lunch before departure.

Canoe Camp was our target this year, which is a few hours down river, and suitable for a larger group. This was a common camp site for the Voyagers groups in years past, and the site on the point is a great site any time of year.



Getting to camp is always a great time, and as long as no one passes it by, its usually an occasion worth celebrating, after all getting into camp to set up, and get a fire going is a great way to begin. Of course this past September, the weather was warmer than normal, so a fire was not exactly what we were all wanting right off the git-go.

However, as we made camp, some going off to explore or secure firewood, we began setting up the camp kitchen, and kitchen tent. By the time evening rolled around, we had things looking pretty ship-shape, and a fire crackling away with an excellent view of the river.



Dinner was served about dusk, and included Brisket, Brats, Scalloped Potato, Beans, Fruit, Nuts & a collection of drinks from coffee to pineapple juice. The second night we had white chicken chili, and it was pretty good all-around, mixing things up – keeping the menu fresh...I guess. Anyway, food around the camp is always great, and tastes great just because. It's the smoke, the river and the feel of the woods in my opinion.

After dishes are done, we get a pot of coffee going, some hot cocoa, and bank the fire for some time spent in conversation with one another around the fire. There is always something to talk about, and learn from one another as we sit watching the flames and sparks...of course it would not be a camp fire without the wincing, squinting and occasional shifting drift we do as a means of avoiding the smoke! Now, this said, a smoky fire is an inefficient fire, which is of course no

good for anyone – each of knowing full well the annoying musical chairs dance we play to avoid the stuff, so keeping good dry hardwood on a fire, laid out so the fire can get enough air is imperative. This is the focus of our objective – right?



The dynamic in camp is not always the same. We have camped along different stretches of the Au Sable River, from Grayling on down to Lumberman's Monument, and each trip is uniquely different. The time spent along the river involves good food, hiking, paddling, building a lean-to or competing in one of the games we play around camp. No matter what it is, there is no doubt we all enjoy the time away, out on the river.



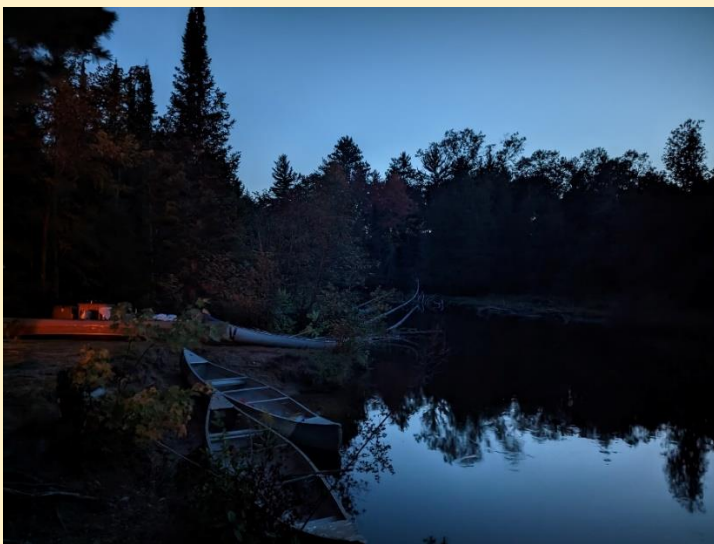
Canoe camp has an island directly in front of the camp, which is serves as pretty good canoe race. We time those who paddle around the island. Here are two of the finalists returning to shore (Left).

One group decided to paddle back up stream to a former park located where the old railroad crossed the Au Sable. Now, this is no easy feat with the Au Sable's known strong current, but this group of ladies did it without any trouble – Bravo! This camp serves as a nice place to take a break – or have a picnic on paddles between Grayling and Keystone Landing or even Stephans Bridge. The site was originally created back in the 1920's, and was accessible by boat or train.

There is quite a bit of history along the Au Sable River, from the Holy Waters stretch down to Oscoda, and all of those tributaries, you'll find there is a great deal to learn and explore along the banks of this gem of a waterway. The Castle Ruins on the South Branch, or the Chapel located deep in the Mason Tract, to lumber mills, parks and historic cabins with loads and loads of history – especially for those who love Fly fishing.



Nap time is typically a given along the river... who can avoid this in camp on a nice afternoon?



As the day winds down, and the sky turns it darker shades of blue, we can hear an owl down river somewhere. Around the fire we can make out the multiple conversations taking place, followed by rounds of laughter. The fire cracks loudly, the hoot own calls out again.

The last of the coffee finally gives out around 10 pm, and by this time, we've lost about 60% of our group already. A few of the die-hards refuse to sleep, and the conversation continues, touching on the usual topics...

And then, with smoke in your already burning eyes you too call it a night. As you stand up and stretch, the owl hoots again. He's further away now you think as you tip your tin cup to finish the last swallow of cold coffee, and reach up to turn down the lantern. As you untie your boots, and fold up your clothes, you make plans for getting up at 5am, coffee, breakfast and so on... and then, you lay back and your gone.

But!!! Tonight, or should we say this morning, you arise early. Not the 5am you planned, but rather 1:45 am. That's right, I awoke at about 1:45 am, and feeling like I slept a full night – got up feeling great, and because I awoke as I normally do each morning at 5am, I jumped out of bed and began the kitchen tasks – coffee, fresh water, early prep for breakfast etc. Interestingly enough, others were awakened by this, or should we say 'to' this racket, and curiously laid quietly in bed wondering what I was up to. Of course, in my mind, it was 5am, in their mind, it was too early! Fortunately, we try to keep things quiet in camp before everyone gets up, so the 'racket' wasn't really noisy, but nonetheless, it had an audience.

Within thirty minutes, after the coffee was percolated, and I poured a cup, a short walk out to look up at the open sky was in order. As I stood there, perched on a great big white pine root along the river, gazing up at the stars, it became apparent the stars were out of sync! How could this be I thought. Well, as it turns out, the stars were in sync, it was me who was out!



We all had a great time, ate well, good friends and good conversation, along the Au Sable, who wouldn't enjoy this? But as with all good things, Sunday rolled around, and we awoke to a foggy Sunday morning. Breakfast was already underway as folks began rolling out of their bags. This morning was French toast, Eggs & Sausage, and whatever else we wanted – the last meal being one to clean up the leftovers! It is also the last meal on the river.



Buck & Andy were in the cookhouse this morning, and they did a spectacular job at feeding the troops while we began boxing up the camp stores.



And then the loading begins. Moving crates and rolled up canvas to the river bank, we load the packs amongst the different canoes, ensuring all of it is situated correctly, and evenly. The last items to be packed are those associated with the kitchen, and once the dishes are done, the camp kitchen is packed away and loaded into the canoe. By now it is 8am, and the canoes are in the water and ready to be launched, but not before we snap a photo or two of the group.

Sunday morning was a bit more chilly than those preceding days in camp, and we all had our woolies on. Over the river the fog hangs, concealing the view down river, all in all, a perfect setting for our departure. Missing in this photo below is Eric Swager, and his daughter Marie.

In the photo below, we wanted to share that many in the group (below) were not missing their left leg...right, and legs... also, no animals were injured in the capturing of this picture.



The end of another paddle down the mighty Au Sable, what a treat! As we departed camp, one last look at the site which has served us many times over the past 12 years fades into the fog behind us. The many memories that swirl around in your head often leave you with a melancholy awareness just how fast time passes by us. It also encourages us to take full advantage of the time we have today, and to make the best of it. It was just the other day when our two young ladies were sitting between my wife and I as we paddled down the many rivers throughout Michigan, and now, grown, they paddle their own canoe.

I am grateful for the occasions we have together, time along the river. The many people that attend the event make it a memorable experience, and we all look forward to the next year...



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The Roth's
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SMOKELESS CARTRIDGES.

THESE TWO CUTS SHOW A SOFT POINT BULLET BEFORE AND AFTER SHOOTING.

and when the bullet strikes it spreads at the point, as shown in the cut. The full metal patched bullets have a metal patch or jacket to the point covering the entire bullet and keep their shape after shooting. We recommend soft point bullets for hunting purposes through 58 pine boards, 3/4-inch thick, full metal patched are better; for instance, a 30-caliber Army metal patched bullet will go through 35 boards 3/4-inch thick in the same distance, while a lead bullet would go through only about one-half as many boards. **DON'T LOAD SHOTGUN SMOKELESS POWDER INTO CARTRIDGE SHELLS.** In fact, we advise using only factory loaded smokeless cartridges. Our terms are cash with order.

Metallic Cartridges, loaded with Smokeless Powder, are all the same shape and size as regular Black Powder Cartridges.

loaded ammunition is safe, but we have heard of rifles bursting BY LOADING SHOTGUN SMOKELESS POWDER IN RIFLE CARTRIDGES.



RIM FIRE SMOKELESS COME WITH LEAD BULLETS ONLY.

No.	Caliber	Grains of Pow'dr	Grains of Lead	Weight per 100	Price for 50	Price for 100
6R2535	22 Short	1 1/4	20	10 oz.	\$0.15	\$0.30
6R2537	22 Short Hollow Point	1 1/4	27	9 oz.	.17	.33
6R2539	22 Long	2 1/4	35	12 oz.	.22	.44
6R2541	32 Extra Short	2 1/2	35	10 oz.	.36	.73

CENTRAL FIRE SMOKELESS CARTRIDGES, RIFLE AND PISTOL SIZES.

NOTICE.—L. means Lead Bullet, S. P. means Soft Point Bullet and M. P. means Metal Patched Bullet.

All Smokeless Cartridges are the same style and size as Black Powder Cartridges. Cartridges cannot be sent by mail.



No.	Caliber	Grains of Pow'dr	Grains of Lead	Weight per 100	Price for 50	Price for 100
6R2551	22 Winchester S. S.	5 1/4	45 L.	1 1/4 lbs.	\$0.70	\$1.40
6R2553	25-20 Marlin '94	7 1/4	86 L.	2 1/4 lbs.	.78	1.56
6R2555	25-20 Winchester '92	7 1/4	86 L.	2 1/4 lbs.	.78	1.56
6R2557	25-20 Single Shot	8 1/4	86 L.	2 1/4 lbs.	.87	1.73
6R2565	32 S. & W.	3 1/4	85 L.	1 1/4 lbs.	.50	.99
6R2566	32-20 Winchester	9	115 M. P.	3 lbs.	.83	1.65
6R2567	32-20 Marlin	9	115 S. P.	3 lbs.	.83	1.65
6R2568	32-20 Winchester	9	115 S. P.	3 lbs.	.83	1.65
6R2569	32-20 Marlin	9	145 L.	3 lbs.	.64	1.28
6R2571	38 S. & W.	4 3/4	180 M. P.	4 lbs.	.99	1.98
6R2573	38-40 Winchester	18	180 M. P.	4 lbs.	.99	1.98
6R2574	38-40 Marlin	18	180 M. P.	4 lbs.	.99	1.98
6R2575	38-40 Winchester	18	180 S. P.	4 lbs.	.99	1.98
6R2576	38-40 Marlin	18	180 S. P.	4 lbs.	.99	1.98
6R2577	38 Long Colts	5	150 L.	3 1/4 lbs.	.68	1.36
6R2580	38 Colts Automatic	8	105 M. P.	3 lbs.	1.07	2.14
6R2581	41 Long Colts	10	196 L.	4 lbs.	.83	1.65
6R2584	44-40 Winchester	17	300 M. P.	4 1/2 lbs.	.99	1.98
6R2585	44-40 Marlin	17	300 M. P.	4 1/2 lbs.	.99	1.98
6R2586	44-40 Winchester	17	200 S. P.	4 1/2 lbs.	.99	1.98
6R2587	44-40 Marlin	17	200 S. P.	4 1/2 lbs.	.99	1.98
6R2589	45 Colts	10	255	5 1/2 lbs.	1.01	2.02

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All smokeless cartridges are the same style and size as black powder regular cartridges.

Cartridges cannot be sent by mail.



No. 6R2613 No. 6R2612 No. 6R2611 No. 6R2608 No. 6R2605 No. 6R2603 No. 6R2601 No. 6R2519 No. 6R2639 No. 6R2631 No. 6R2633 No. 6R2637 No. 6R2641

NOTICE.
L. means Lead Bullet.
M. P. means Metal Patched Bullet.
S. P. means Soft Point Bullet.



No.	Caliber	Grains of Pow'dr	Grains of Lead	Weight per 100	Price for 20	Price for 100	No.	Caliber	Grains of Pow'dr	Grains of Lead	Weight per 100	Price for 20	Price for 100
6R2600	25-35 Winchester	23	117 M. P.	4 1/4 lbs.	\$0.59	\$2.88	6R2618	30 Marlin, Short Range	6	100 L.	5 1/4 lbs.	\$0.53	\$2.63
6R2601	25-35 Winchester	23	117 S. P.	4 1/4 lbs.	.59	2.88	6R2619	32-40 Marlin	17	165 M. P.	5 1/4 lbs.	.56	2.80
6R2602	25-35 Winchester	23	117 M. P.	4 1/4 lbs.	.59	2.88	6R2620	32-40 Marlin	17	165 S. P.	5 1/4 lbs.	.56	2.80
6R2603	25-36 Marlin	23	117 S. P.	4 1/4 lbs.	.59	2.88	6R2623	38-55 Marlin & Winchester	19	255 M. P.	7 lbs.	.70	3.49
6R2605	30-30 Winchester	30	160 M. P.	6 lbs.	.67	3.32	6R2624	38-55 Marlin & Winchester	19	255 S. P.	7 lbs.	.70	3.49
6R2607	30-30 Winchester	30	160 S. P.	6 lbs.	.67	3.32	6R2626	38-56 Winchester	25	255 S. P.	8 lbs.	.70	3.49
6R2608	303 Savage	30	180 S. P.	6 1/4 lbs.	.67	3.32	6R2630	38-72 Winchester	25	275 S. P.	9 lbs.	.75	3.75
6R2609	303 Savage	30	180 S. P.	6 1/4 lbs.	.53	2.62	6R2632	40-65 Winchester	27	260 S. P.	7 1/4 lbs.	.70	3.50
6R2611	303 Savage Miniature	5 1/4	100 L.	5 lbs.	.88	4.37	6R2633	40-65 Winchester	27	330 M. P.	9 lbs.	.75	3.75
6R2612	6 M. M. U. S. Navy	37	112 M. P.	6 lbs.	.88	4.37	6R2637	40-83 Winchester	33	280 M. P.	8 lbs.	.75	3.75
6R2613	30 U. S. Army	37	230 M. P.	7 1/4 lbs.	.88	4.37	6R2638	40-83 Winchester	33	285 S. P.	8 lbs.	.75	3.75
6R2615	30 U. S. Army	37	230 S. P.	7 1/4 lbs.	.67	3.32	6R2639	45-70 Government	29	405 M. P.	10 lbs.	.74	3.67
6R2616	30-30 Marlin	30	160 M. P.	6 lbs.	.67	3.32	6R2640	45-70 Government	29	405 S. P.	10 lbs.	.74	3.67
6R2617	30-30 Marlin	30	170 S. P.	6 lbs.	.67	3.32	6R2641	45-90 Winchester	37	300 M. P.	9 lbs.	.75	3.75
6R2617	30 Winchester Short Range	6	100 L.	5 1/4 lbs.	.53	2.63	6R2647	50-110 Winchester	43	300 M. P.	10 lbs.	.96	4.80

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VOYAGERS - Au Sable River Valley 2023



Looking back now over the past ninety days since our trip down the Au Sable River, it is hard to understand where the time goes. We talked about this at the beginning of this newsletter, but when you've made dozens of trips down a stretch of river like our Au Sable, and the memories all seem to run together like watercolors, each trip becomes one of your favorites. This past fall's trip was no different!

My wife and I had just returned from Montana about four days before our departure, so a great deal of the work was done before we left two weeks prior. Glad we did, because as we neared the Friday departure date, I found myself eager to get on the road – always a good sign. There were a few disappointments, however. Leading up to Friday, we had about three cancellations – most of which were likely due to the daunting forecast, which was cold and rainy... but, as with so many of our trips, we never had a drop of rain. Besides, as Andy Jerue always says, 'The rainy trips have always been the best', and that my friend reins true!

Early Friday morning we welcomed in the troops, ate a wonderful breakfast (Sliders), made by my loving wife, and mounted up for the trek north, departing just after 8:30 am. The skies were heavy that morning, and the thought of cold rain may have been circulating somewhere in the backs of our minds, but regardless, we were a 'Corp of discovery', and determined to enjoy the benefits of three days on the river!



We kept a steady pace that morning, spurred on by the waiting loads of adventure, and in no time, we were rolling down the hill into Mio. Hinchman's, who has been one of our outfitters for a long time, has their location right on the river. Craig does a great job, helping out quite a bit – spotting our vehicles for us when we paddle below Mio Dam. Hinchmans also has cabins, canoes, a campground and more – great choice for your 'up north' trips! This fall we had a small group, so unloading and packing canoes is

Short work, we were done in no time! With a quick small lunch, and a word of prayer, we headed down those familiar waters – sights and smells of the north woods.



Seth & Tristin, both from Barry County, led the pack with Andy Jerue – I was paddling the heavy freighter canoe, so I followed close behind. The weather was good, a little chilly to start, but paddling is great medicine for a chill.

Someone at the launch had asked if we'd look for a bicycle that was stolen, and thrown into the river, so we all participated in the search, at least for the first mile. The Au Sable River runs fast through this stretch and runs cold. The temperature of

this river averages, during the fall, between 49 and 60 degrees, which is a pretty big swing. The week prior to our departure, the river temperatures were recorded at 60 degrees. During our trip, we were near 50 degrees and under.

The river 'float time' to McKinley takes about four plus hours. Paddling hard, you can make it in three plus. Today, we found that the young men were getting tuckered out as we passed by Comins Flats. The goal





was to make it down to a point just above Bear Island. For several years I have eyed a campsite there up on the high bank overlooking an oxbow in the river. So, naturally, I thought this would be a great location, but it was a tough paddle one afternoon. With the sun sinking lower, I paddled hard to get the ol' freighter canoe into the lead. Rounding bend after bend, I recalled a spot that might work, which had a creek running through it. And there it was, up there on the right! The creek made a natural small harbor, so getting the canoes in was a cinch. Staying dry was too!



As our contingent paddled in, it was clear this was an appealing choice for a camp, and all were ready to land their legs on dry ground. Looking around, Andy and I discussed where we ought

to set up the camp kitchen, and due to the malediction denunciation of our weather report, it was a clear choice to sleep with the rain fly at the ready!

The small brook, known as Cauchy creek, runs cool and clear out of the springs to the south. Where it passes by our camp, it runs about four to five feet in width, and a small row of stones break the water before entering the mainstream of the Au Sable. The 'babbling brook' as it were, was a welcome addition to this camp, which also served us well with a fresh supply of water for cooking and cleaning.

Each Corp member engaged in getting camp in order. Andy and I focused on the kitchen and sleeping quarters, while the other young men dug the latrine, gathered firewood and prepared the campfire. There was one interesting detail with this camp however, a detail that would encourage a heightened degree of circumspect amongst the men... tree roots! Now, we've had tree roots in camps along the river, of course, this is nothing new, however, here, and what would become known as 'Stumble Camp', was a root system among root systems. Daytime travel about camp, well you needed to be mindful, but after dark, with shadows cast by the fire, was downright treacherous.



Roots or no, in no time, we were sitting around the flames of our fire, and preparing to enjoy the evening meal – which was of course, brisket, potato and green beans. A meal fit for a king perhaps.

Coffee, juice and mixed fruit and nuts are always at the ready in camp. If hungry, one simply helps himself to a few handfuls, tiding him over until the next meal. Breakfast and Dinner being the sit-down meals on our trips. Lunch is typically meat sticks, crackers, and cheese.



The tin can in the fire is used to boil crawfish, which apparently has been a popular late-night snack for the past few years.

Of course, we emphasize the word snack, as it does require a satisfactory number of crawfish to make a meal.

Seth, Tristin, and Eric were excellent procuring the necessary crawfish for the meal, and brought them around, prepared them and boiled them in a special camp mixture of spices. While Andy and I did not participate in the fare, we were told it was above par.

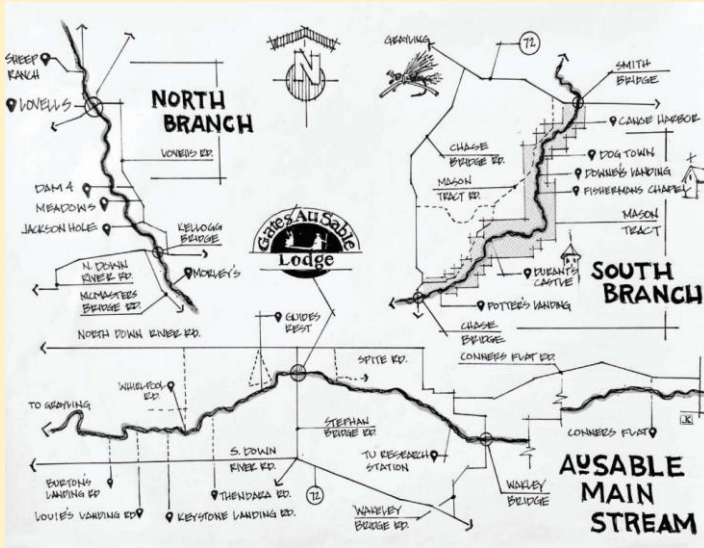
We brought the fly rods along on this trip, and Saturday was a day to get them out and into action. Camp was situated on a rapid, just to the east of camp, and a tight bend to our west. The current flows across a stony portion of the river, the current being very strong here, even in ten inches of water – watch your step!

Now, it must be stated that Fly fishing is not your average fishing, and requires more time, and detail getting things rigged up to go. I had forgotten my goggles (thick lenses) so tying the fly proved to be challenging, so we went with a couple poor surgeons and ended with a snell... this would do.



Getting out onto the river is always a source of excitement, and you have to remember, that it takes a few minutes to get into your groove, find the right water, and then, to focus on your cast, back cast and learning your haul (Pulling the line as you cast). This is one of the areas we need to recognize as we enter into the world of fly fishing, or fly casting, tying, or virtually all of what makes up the sport. One of the best things to remember, is take your time learning the sport. Enjoy the stages that are involved with learning the 'ins and outs' of fly fishing.

All too often, the pressure we allow to be created, causes us to steer away from the ultimate pleasure that comes from this ancient method of fishing.



The Au Sable River, and all its branches or tributaries, has a long history in fly fishing. In fact, plenty of historic lodges still remain, and open to the public, those who love the sport, and those unforgettable 'Holy Waters' of this terrific river.

As our young men made their casts, I hoped for one of them to hit pay-dirt. A few hits, dozens of casts and a few catches ended the day, and we returned to the quiet camp for dinner. Saturday night, our last night on the river, was a meal around the fire, talking about purpose, past events and the planned

adventure each of the young men had hatched – more crawfish!



The river has a way of drawing our attention. Each time we drive along a river, cross over on a highway, or hear about a scenic overview, we find ourselves being captivated by it. The river seldom runs in a straight line for very long. It meanders here and there, at times the river

rapidly increases its pace along its course to the sea, and other times, it barely moves along. It runs warm, and cold, never does the beginning see its end, and never does it return to its beginning. I guess there is much to learn from something like this.

As we spend time together in camp, fishing or on a hike, there is no loss of opportunity to instruct, encourage and train those young men who have joined us on another trip. We plant seeds, knowing that one day, down the road, they will take root in that particular man's life. If done correctly, we may be a part of that young man growing to be a better man than we were – making perhaps a greater impact on those who follow. Regardless of the topic, when we choose to invest in our youth, we reinforce our own future potential, and just maybe we add another layer of conservation to what matters in our nation today.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

In 1968, the National Wild and Scenic River Act was passed, which was to provide for a national Wild and Scenic River System, and for other purposes. Looking at this system today, where it began, those who fought for its existence, and where the act is today, I am truly grateful. Because of this act, we Americans have the opportunity to see, hike and paddle down wild stretches of river – virtuously unhindered by civilization. The Au Sable of course is one of those rivers selected to be wild and scenic.

Rivers like the Clearwater of Idaho, the Eleven Point in Missouri, the Feather River of California or the St Croix River, running wild through Minnesota and Wisconsin, were all original designations for this act. As the years passed, others were added. Consider for a moment what things would be like today without such conservation. The same goes for state game and fisheries, the recent reintroduction of Grayling to Michigan waters, all of which we benefit from.



One of the fly rods we brought with us belonged to former DNR Officer Paul Scheppelman, who was instrumental in the introduction of Salmon to the Great Lakes. He was also a biologist who was instrumental in drawing attention to the importance of our Trout streams.

When we are out on the water, and casting, it helps to know a little of the history we hold in our hand, and equally the importance of conserving its integrity. Left, Tristin Strong with Paul's old Fly Rod.

Voyagers Canoe Trips wants to encourage you today to get outdoors and enjoy it! The years go by so quickly, and it becomes more and more obvious to us as we age. Several years ago, I made up my mind that I was going to enjoy life, doing what I enjoy doing – and this decision proved fruitful. Working hard is indeed an important part of life, but we ought to place as much emphasis on our family, friends, and those less fortunate as we do our career! Now, we are looking to place guilt on anyone here, but rather draw attention to the importance of living intentionally and making every moment count. On a Voyagers trip, we have about 36 hours of one-on-one time with the young men who attend. It is our goal to instill the ideals, values and etiquette we older men possess, so that they too may grow to see what is important in life.

Of course, we understand the nature of our task, and that it too must be enjoyable, fun, and that is why we plan to avoid taking ourselves too seriously.





Evening camp is great, the fire, the lanterns and the talk of daring dos or past forays into the big pineries, who doesn't enjoy all that – especially with a hot cup of coffee, freshly percolated river water!



Sunday morning broke early, and before the sun had a chance to climb over the ridge, we were underway with a hearty breakfast along the river bank. As we flipped hot cakes and sausage, everyone was busy breaking camp. We had a hail ahead of us today, so we wanted to get started early, and possibly explore a few sites along the way.

The morning was a chilly one, so I put my trusty wool sweater on, which has a story to tell someday, and loaded the past of the gear into the freighter. With a glance and quick pass through camp, to ensure nothing important is left behind, we boarded our canoes and pushed off for stretches unknown – well sort of.

The skies were overcast this morning, but we still had not experienced any rain, and it did not look like it would today, so that was a blessing. As we approached McKinley Bridge, the clock

was nearing 10 am. We were making decent time, and planned to stop off on Bear Island to show the gang this great campsite (small groups only – island not too big).

We also stopped off along the south shore, to walk through the spot I had originally intended to camp at, and it was a nice location – plenty of timber and a view of the river – upstream and down.

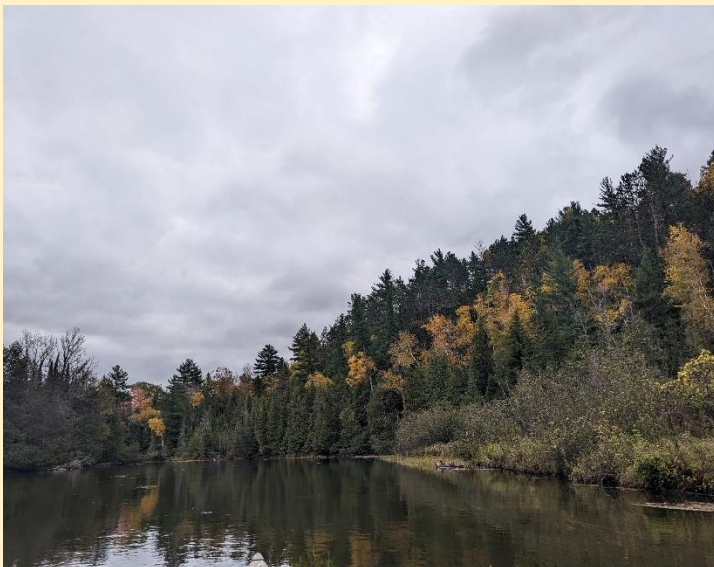


Alas, we rounded the big bend near stone wall, and could see the sand dune ahead. This high point is a popular stopping off point, and has been for years. The view from here is spectacular, allowing the viewer to see twenty-five miles on a clear day.

As we landed, tied off the canoes – the younger of the corp charged up the steep embankment in an all out race to the top!

Andy, how about you and I go up the stairs. The hike to the top will get your blood pumping, so its nice to see the benches waiting for us along the rim. Now, we all gather around for a few minutes in devotion. Andy gets out his Bible, and turns to a few chapters addressing mens avoidance to things which make them weak. This lesson, now an even greater threat, has much to teach the young men, and it serves as a

warning against loosing your way in life, suffering the consequences of poor choices in life. Afterall, a man will fail, but if and when he sees himself as a true man, he will recognize the slight is temporary, and continue forward. Do the right thing, for yourself, for your future spouse, children and friends – you'll be glad you did.



As the trip came to a close, the sun began to peek through the clouds, and the warm sunshine suited us well. We backed the rig down to the water, loaded the gear, and pulled out onto forestry road 4001, west bound. Stopping for Pizza at St. Helen, we got out on the road again, and hammered down for home.

The young men did well this trip. Waiting for them were several items the Voyagers put together to better equip them for their own future woods tromps or trips. A Frost River Canoe Pack, a Custom Camp Axe and a \$100 Gift Certificate for Stormy Kromer.



WE WANT TO HELP EQUIP YOU.

One of our topics most discussed, here inside the Voyagers, is the awards, badges, tools and other gear those young men take home. Cruiser axes, belt ax and knives all become a part of that young man's personal gear – gear he will likely never part with. This is one of our focal points. We know and trust that this method works. Later in life, that particular youth will become an adult, and look back on those tools with a memory he will likely want to pass on to his children.

This is the win-win we look for on every trip. True, not everyone gets a blue ribbon, not all will have a trophy, but if and when they apply themselves, and are willing to listen, the opportunities will present themselves. We call it casting our bread upon the waters.

Try it sometime, you may be surprised at what turns up!

Once again, thank you to all of you Sponsors out there – it really means a great deal to know you support those youth. We also want to thank all of those who work to make the Voyagers Canoe Trips a reality. Want to know more about us, or do you have someone you think would benefit from the Voyagers? Get a hold of us, drop a line or call – email, or check out the website [HERE](#).

So, until next time, **Au Revoir!!**



Parting Thoughts - Something to Consider Today

Our friend Dennis Priddy was recently covered in an article of Muzzle Blast magazine, which specifically focuses on black powder shooting. Dennis is a master craftsman when it comes to creating a true to history flintlock, or wheel lock rifle. His amazing talent has been covered in various publications, and those who have a custom rifle made by Dennis, are aware of what they have.

If you've ever met Dennis and his wife Pat, you know of the hospitality, humility and great conversation, Dennis always seems to make time for those who stop by to chat a while.

In a recent article of Muzzleblast, Wallace Gusler told the author in the 18th century, dyslexia was considered a gift, which enabled those with withit to see things from a different perspective, which allowed them the ability to figure things out, making things work. Dennis shared with us his struggles with this when he was very young, and it was often a challenge as those in the school (teachers) looked down on Dennis' dyslexia, failing to recognize his abilities or those needs he really had.

Today, there are more and more stories coming out which illustrate the true genius of individuals thought to be unteachable, or those whose disability presented too great a challenge for the public school system. We encourage the reader to take time to get to know the potential of such individuals, and provide them the encouragement they require to keep going, following their imagination, and sustaining their views. Who knows what incredible creation will come of it.



Clothes for Outdoor Life

Clothes that stand the racket of fishing, tramping, hunting, and look well through it all — they must have good stuff in them. Forestry Cloth is made by the American Woolen Company especially for this purpose. It is pure wool, protects the body, guards against chill. It is closely woven, turns wind and showers. Soft gray green, blending with rocks and foliage. All weights. The registered trade mark name.

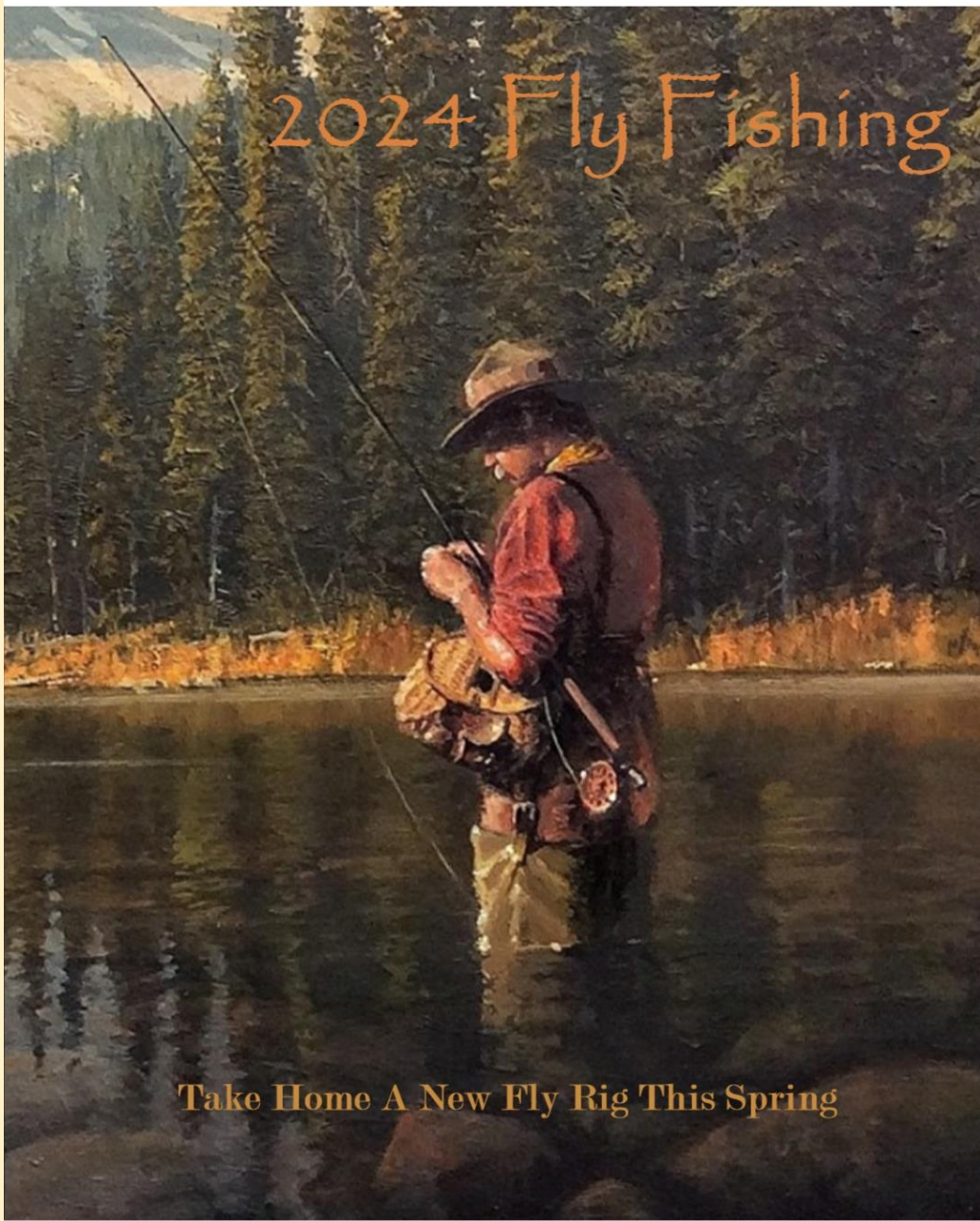
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FLY FISHING 2024, will you be there? This Spring, the Voyagers have another series of great trips planned for those looking for some adventure into the Pineries of the north. Fly fishing is an enjoyable way to take in more of those northern rivers we love, will you be with us?

For those who attend, there will be a chance to take home a new fly rod & reel, a complete rig of your own. Along with the other items, such as packs, knives or axes. Three days in the woods on one of Michigan's wilderness rivers. RSVP today, and reserve your spot with us!