

Paradise Waiting

When I die, let my ashes float down the Green River
 Let my soul roll on up to the Rochester Dam
 I'll be halfway to heaven with Paradise waiting
 Just five miles away from wherever I am
Paradise by John Prine

By Al Larsen

Out on the water, I often find myself singing, and more often than not, it's a John Prine song. Often it's "Pretty Good, Not Bad, Can't Complain," accompanied by an ear-to-ear grin as I soak it all in. But usually it's "Paradise". Yep, paradise is waiting for me out there on the water, wherever I am. My special corner of paradise is the waters of the Adirondacks. Maybe a smallish pond with no one else on it, maybe a big lake with majestic views of adjacent mountains, or maybe a winding river with close-in banks filled with wildflowers and clear-to-the-bottom water, maybe even squiggling up and over a beaver dam. But—what about all of those in one single day trip? Now that's paradise! Guess what – no waiting. In fact a group (gaggle, flock, school, herd?) of CPAers had just such an outing in early September.

The **Cedar River Flow** is a 640-acre lake created by the **Wakely Dam** on the **Cedar River**. It's essentially in the back yard of CPA member Jennifer Bine near the town of Indian Lake, NY. From the intersection of Route 28 and Cedar River Road in Indian Lake (by the cemetery and golf course—no apparent connection between them), follow Cedar River Road 12 miles to a campground. There is a rather large meadow parking area near the dam providing cartop boat access. No motors are allowed on the Cedar River Flow, making it an excellent, secluded spot for wilderness paddling.

Starting out on the lake formed by the dam, we see mountains surrounding the lake, giving perspective as well as a scenic backdrop, and equally scenic islands, creating an interesting paddle path. The CPA Loons check out the avian loons and vice versa. We saw an adult with a juvenile riding on back as they do earlier in the summer. It struck me as getting rather late in the season for the young one to be at that stage of development. It's going to have to be able to fly in about a month, or it will miss the last flight out, as it were.



Mountain views on the Cedar River Flow Photo credit: Al Larsen

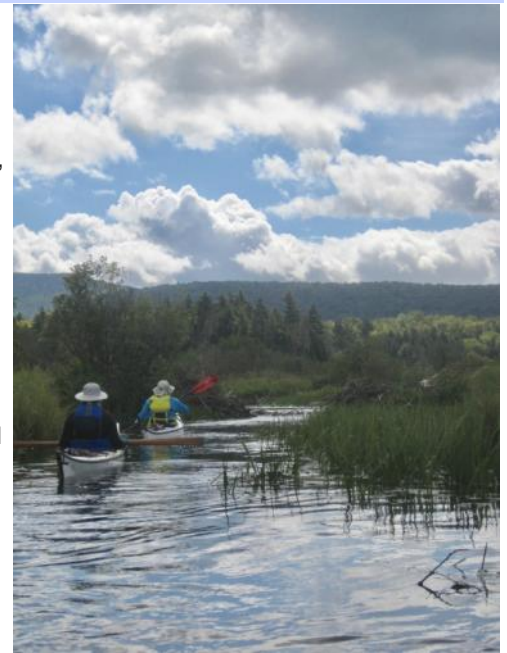
Approaching the far end to the lake, we encounter a beautiful marsh with many braids of stream flow. Hmm. Which is the true creek that we're searching for? The gang spreads out a bit, trying this one and that one, and then we settle on the one that we need. It's clear that one could spend a fair amount of time in trial and error searches.

Fortunately for us, Rich and Sue Stevens had scouted the route the week before and were able to direct our searches to approximately the right area. Even then, we had a bit of trial and error before finding the creek. Not as if paddling around the marsh grasses was wasted time, though; it was beautiful.

Now, we were paddling up a meandering Cedar River, with a large variety of flowers at their end of summer peak. By my reckoning, Joe Pye weed was the most photographed. Ah, peaceful, quiet kayaking, with no sound but our own paddles. Then, there it was: the beaver dam, strategically placed, as those critters are wont to do for their structures. A few of us shimmied up and over, using the dam itself to gain purchase for the final thrust. Others, smarter probably, realized there was a side bit of earth that, while it couldn't be paddled through, did allow for getting out of the boats and just walking a few steps. Each group was convinced it had made the better choice.

Continuing up the river, I was thinking, it sure would be nice to find a spot to stretch the legs, find a, uh, tree, and have some lunch. Nature (or the Adirondack Park folks) anticipated my desires. Tucked into the trees, at a bend up ahead, was an iconic Adirondack lean-to. Even had a nearby out house. Great lunch spot. This made for about a five mile paddle in, including the lake and the river portions, with a half-way destination at just the right spot. After lunch, we continued another half mile until we hit a set of rapids that meant either turning around and heading back, choice of the majority, or pretending to be salmon, and wriggling a bit farther upstream, which some of the gaggle, flock, herd, did. Of course, we had to wait down below the beaver dam for the salmon-group on the return, but we didn't mind taking in the beauty of the marsh where Cedar River flowed into the main lake. Pretty good, not bad, can't complain.

It was Wakely Dam, not Rochester Dam. But, if you can take a trip to the Adirondacks with your kayak, Paradise is waiting.



The meandering Cedar River Photo credit: Al Larsen