Pine Rive

The Pine and Popple Rivers

The Pine and Popple Rivers offer a true wild experience, being among Wisconsin's more remote river systems. The area is rugged and undeveloped. Access is limited and often difficult. The shorelines are heavily wooded with sugar maple, yellow birch, hemlock and white cedar on the upper stretches and aspen, silver and red maple, white and jack pine the most common trees on the lower reaches. The rivers' moods alternate from quiet sections that meander lazily through lowland forest to swift rocky riffles, low rapids and waterfalls. These rivers offer high quality paddling and fishing in a secluded, natural environment. Examples of other enjoyable opportunities along the rivers include hunting, hiking, bird watching and photography. The rivers' greatest attractions are the miles of undeveloped river that allows everyone a chance to find their own special place.

The entire 89-mile length of the Pine River and the 62 miles of its major tributary, the Popple River, were designated by the Wisconsin legislature as state wild rivers in 1965 to be protected from development and kept in a natural, free-flowing condition. Both the Pine and Popple Rivers are born in the vast forests and swamps of the Nicolet National Forest. Within the Forest boundary approximately 80% of the upper 56 miles of the Pine River and 58% of the upper 50 miles of the Popple River are in federal ownership. Mid-way along their courses the rivers leave the national forest and enter the Pine-Popple Wild River project area managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). The WDNR's project area includes the lower 12 miles of the Popple River and the lower 33 miles of the Pine River, ending with the Pine at the Menominee River. At present, approximately 80% percent of the 12,000 acre project area is in public ownership, either the State or Florence County. The remainder is comprised of small privately owned tracts or property owned by We Energies.

Stewardship of the wild rivers is shared by all landowners along the river– small private landowners, commercial timber companies and county, state and federal governments. Also included are lands owned by We Energies in conjunction with their hydroelectric operations at the Pine River and Kingsford dams, which pre-dates wild river designation.

Meyers Fal

The Wild Rivers Legacy Forest

In 2006, the WDNR, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation Forestry, LLC and Forest Investment Associates cooperatively acquired the "Wild Rivers Legacy Forest," comprised of 64,473 acres of forest, more than 48 lakes and ponds, and over 70 miles of rivers and streams in Florence, Forest, and Marinette Counties. This transaction added 2,580 acres along the Pine and Popple Rivers and a 3,030-acre wild lakes complex. Additionally, an innovative working forest conservation easement on adjacent property owned by CFFIA (LLC) will permanently keep the majority of this land open to the public for recreation and ensure that the forests remain healthy and diverse through applied sustainable forestry principles. Although open for some types of public use this easement area is still private property; if you are unsure about permissible activities, please contact the property owners.

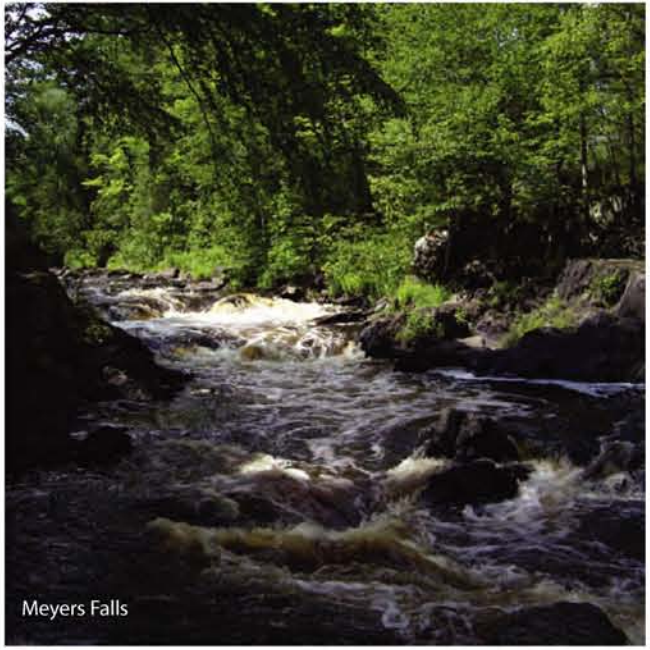
Management

Management on state-owned land along the rivers is designed to show as few traces of human intervention as possible. Except for limited walk-in canoe launch sites, developments are kept back from the river's edge. A "protection zone," managed to maintain and enhance a wild and natural condition, extends 150 feet back from the river's edge or to the visual horizon, whichever is greater. Lands more than 150 feet from the rivers are managed for forestry production, wildlife, and public recreational purposes. Except for road crossings, motorized vehicle access is restricted to designated areas outside of the protection zone. Through agreements with Florence County and the U.S. Forest Service, lands under their ownership along the Pine and Popple Rivers are managed under similar philosophies.

The Pine-Popple river shorelines are further protected from development impacts by Florence County's Wild River Ordinance. This ordinance regulates activities on lands within 400 feet of a wild river or the visual horizon, whichever is greater.

The Robago-Savage Wild Lakes Complex

Savage, Robago, Mud, and Dorothy Lakes are undeveloped lakes in a wilderness setting with unimproved carry-in access. These lakes are important to eagles, osprey, and loons as well as other waterfowl and marsh birds, but fishery values are limited due to occasional winterkill. The DNR will manage the lakes and associated uplands for their natural and recreation values using the same management approach as the Wild Rivers property.



Meyers Falls

Waterfalls

The Pine and Popple Rivers have seven named waterfalls, with the Pine River's 22-foot high LaSalle Falls being the highest and most impressive. Most waterfalls are accessible by foot from either town or county forest roads. A guide pamphlet dealing specifically with waterfalls in Florence County has been developed by the Florence County Forestry and Parks Department and is available at the Florence Natural Resource and Wild Rivers Interpretive Center.

Savage La

Public Access, Multiple Use

The lakes, rivers, and lands of the Pine-Popple Wild Rivers Project are popular for multiple uses, including canoeing, kayaking, tubing, sightseeing, fishing, hunting, camping, berry picking and other outdoor recreation activities. All publicly-owned lands are open for these uses.

The private property in the Wild Rivers Legacy Forest is under a conservation easement, open to the public for recreational uses including hiking, hunting, and fishing. Certain trails and roads across both public and private property are open for vehicle access, snowmobile and all-terrain vehicles as posted.

The We Energies lands are also open to the public, except for the areas near the dam and power generating facilities, which are closed for public safety and security reasons.

Many access sites on the upper Pine River are unimproved and do not offer off-road parking. Also, many gravel roads, like the Goodman Grade, are marginally improved or are unimproved, and poorly marked. A four-wheel drive vehicle, truck or other vehicle with high ground clearance is needed. Note: There is no bridge on the Goodman Grade at either the Pine River or Popple River.

Wildlife

The high, wooded ridges and peat moss bottomlands along the river provide excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife. Large and small game species abound; hunters can expect to find deer, bear, ruffed grouse, woodcock, squirrel, rabbit, snowshoe hare, wild turkey and various species of waterfowl. The river corridor is also home to furbearers such as coyote, beaver, muskrat, otter, weasel, mink and fisher. There are many nongame species from common species such as porcupines and flying squirrels to less frequent visitors such as wolves and pine martens. Bald eagles, osprey, northern goshawk, red-shouldered hawk and many resident and migratory songbirds frequent this area. The river, wetlands and ponds are also important for assorted turtles, frogs, and salamanders.

Fishing

The Pine and Popple Rivers provide anglers with an aesthetic and challenging fishing experience. They are well known for the trout fishing opportunities they provide and both support native brook trout populations. Hatchery- raised brook and brown trout are also stocked where habitat for native populations is poor.

Trout fishing is generally best in May and June before water temperatures warm and again in September as the water cools. Angling for summer trout can be a challenge. Summer success is increased by locating deep water runs with spring seepage or below feeder streams where water temperatures are cooler. Tributary streams also can offer good fishing when trout are seeking cooler water. Fishing from the riverbank can be difficult as many reaches are flanked with heavy brush and trees.

Warm water fishing is a bit more predictable on the lower stretches of the Pine. In the Pine River Flowage and downstream below CTH N expect to find northern, walleye, smallmouth bass and panfish. Fishing for northerns, small-mouth bass and walleyes is best in the morning and evening hours. Panfish success depends on their feeding behavior, which can occur any time during the day. To improve angling success, look for weed beds or other forms of bottom structure that will concentrate fish.

Robago Lake

Washburn Fa

Camping

Canoe Camping: Rules governing camping differ depending on land ownership. A limited number of primitive canoe campsites are provided along the river on *state-owned lands*. Camping is not restricted on *Florence County and Nicolet National Forest land*, the user may set up on any suitable site along the river. Camping may or may not be permitted by the landowner on *private industrial forest land* and local inquiries should be made as to the permissibility of camping on these lands.

Campgrounds: A number of small campgrounds are located in the river area. All campgrounds have toilets and drinking water, except for We Energies site number 24 on the south side of the Pine Flowage where water isn't available.

Upper river- U.S. Forest Service campgrounds:

Chipmunk Rapids	6 sites on the Pine River
Lost Lake	27 sites
Lauterman Lake	5 sites
Perch Lake	5 sites
Morgan Lake	18 sites

Mid-river—We Energies:

Pine River Flowage	site 34, north—3 sites
	site 24, south—3 sites

Mid-river—Florence County:

Emily Lake	18 sites
West Bass Lake	18 sites

Canoeing

Beautiful scenery and solitude abound on this river system. The Pine and Popple Rivers offer canoe trips of all lengths, from a short two-hour trip around a loop called the "Oxbow" to a full day adventure. River trips also offer an array of challenges from relaxing quiet water floats on the lower Pine to expert-level whitewater runs on the Popple.

Water levels are critical for an enjoyable trip on either river. When water levels are moderate to high, canoeing can very enjoyable—at other times it can be a walking experience. The best season for river running, particularly on the whitewater sections, is April through May when spring snow melt and rains swell the river's flow. An exception is the lower Pine River which usually offers good paddling into the summer.

When planning a trip keep safety as a top priority. All watercraft must be equipped with a Coast Guard approved lifesaving device for each person on board; wearing of these devices at all times is recommended. Do not overload your watercraft or paddle beyond your skill level.

The Pine River: The Pine River has two different personalities. The playful upper river, above LaSalle Falls, alternates between deep, slow meanders and rapids or falls. The lower river, the last ten miles downstream of the Pine River Flowage, offers relaxed paddling with a steady current and only a few gentle riffles.

Even beginning whitewater paddlers can enjoy the upper Pine River by portaging the more difficult rapids and falls. Most rapids are rated Class I-II. Scout each rapid and falls and portage if at all in doubt about your river paddling skills. Snake Tail Rapids has a portage across private property on the south bank of the river. Meyers Falls is hazardous and is a portage for all but expert whitewater paddlers, ***approach it with caution.*** Powerful LaSalle Falls is a 22-foot vertical drop and requires a challenging half-mile portage that bypasses the falls and the canyon. The best portage trail is on the right side of the river. It also offers the best views of the falls.

Portions of the middle Pine are wide, shallow and tough-going in low water. To help judge canoeability a staff water level gauge is located near the STH 101 bridge over the Pine River. Look for it downstream on the left side. A minimum gauge reading of one is recommended for a pleasant trip.

The lower Pine River between the dam and the Menominee River is much more accessible, has no major waterfalls or rapids and therefore is suitable for paddlers of all skill levels. A very popular trip is locally known as the "Oxbow". Use the put-in at the CTH N bridge and take-out at the next landing, located about one-half mile north on CTH N. Because the river makes a large loop, only one vehicle is needed for the outing as the take-out is only a ten-minute walk back along the road to the car. In total there are five convenient access sites on the lower stretch of the Pine River, making for many combinations of canoeing trips.

The Popple River: Canoeing on the Popple River is much less common than on the Pine due to frequent low water conditions and the portages around its four waterfalls. Typically, the Popple River is not canoeable after mid-May unless there is adequate precipitation. *The lower section of the Popple River (downstream of Morgan Lake Rd.) is the most difficult whitewater on the watershed, and it is recommended only for experts with suitable equipment and skills.* Upstream of Morgan Lake Rd. paddlers will find easy, but shallow and rocky rapids. In general, for a pleasant trip on the Popple, a minimum gauge reading of two at either the STH 101 or Morgan Lake Road crossing is recommended. This represents a flow of about 200 cubic feet per second.

Lasalle Falls

*Typical Canoe Trips and Approximate Travel Times**

Pine River

Hwy 55 to Hwy 139	15 mi.	7 hr.
Hwy 139 to FS Rd 2156	6 mi.	3 hr.

(Chipmunk Rapids)

Chipmunk Rapids to Goodman Grade	10 mi.	5 hr.
Goodman Grade to STH 101	9 mi.	6 hr.
Pine River dam to CTH N	2 mi.	1 hr.
CTH N to Oxbow Landing	3.5 mi.	2 hr.
CTH N to Ellwood Lake Landing	7 mi.	5 hr.

Popple River

FS Rd 2398 to FS Rd	9 mi.	5 hr.

2159 (Morgan Lake Rd)

Morgan Lake Rd to STH 101	5.5 mi.	4 hr.
STH 101 to confluence with Pine River	6 mi.	4 hr.

* travel times vary greatly depending on water levels.

Rules of the Rivers

The Pine-Popple Wild River project depends upon its users for respect and cleanliness.

- Please keep the wild rivers clean—pack out all your trash. Provisions do not exist for trash disposal along the rivers or at landings.
- When using the rivers, respect the rights of other visitors and of landowners along the rivers.
- Remember, the removal of vegetation, rocks, minerals, and wildflowers from the wild rivers is not permitted.
- Designated use areas are those developed areas such as trails, campsites, picnic areas or those developed areas or facilities which are inspected and maintained by the Department and shown on this property map. All other areas on the Pine-Popple are considered undesignated and are not maintained or inspected by the Department on a regular basis. Please exercise common sense and good judgment at all times when using the rivers.

Big Bull Falls

More Information

The Florence Natural Resource and Wild Rivers Interpretive Center
4793 Forestry Drive
Florence, WI 54121
(888) 889-0049

WDNR Wild Rivers Manager
4842 Forestry Drive
Florence, WI 54121
(715) 528-4400 ext. 119

Emergencies
Forest County Sheriff—911
or
(715) 478-3331
Florence County Sheriff—911 or (715) 528-3346

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This publication is available in alternative format (large print, Braille, audio tape, etc) upon request. Please call (608) 267-7490 for more information.

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Stewardship

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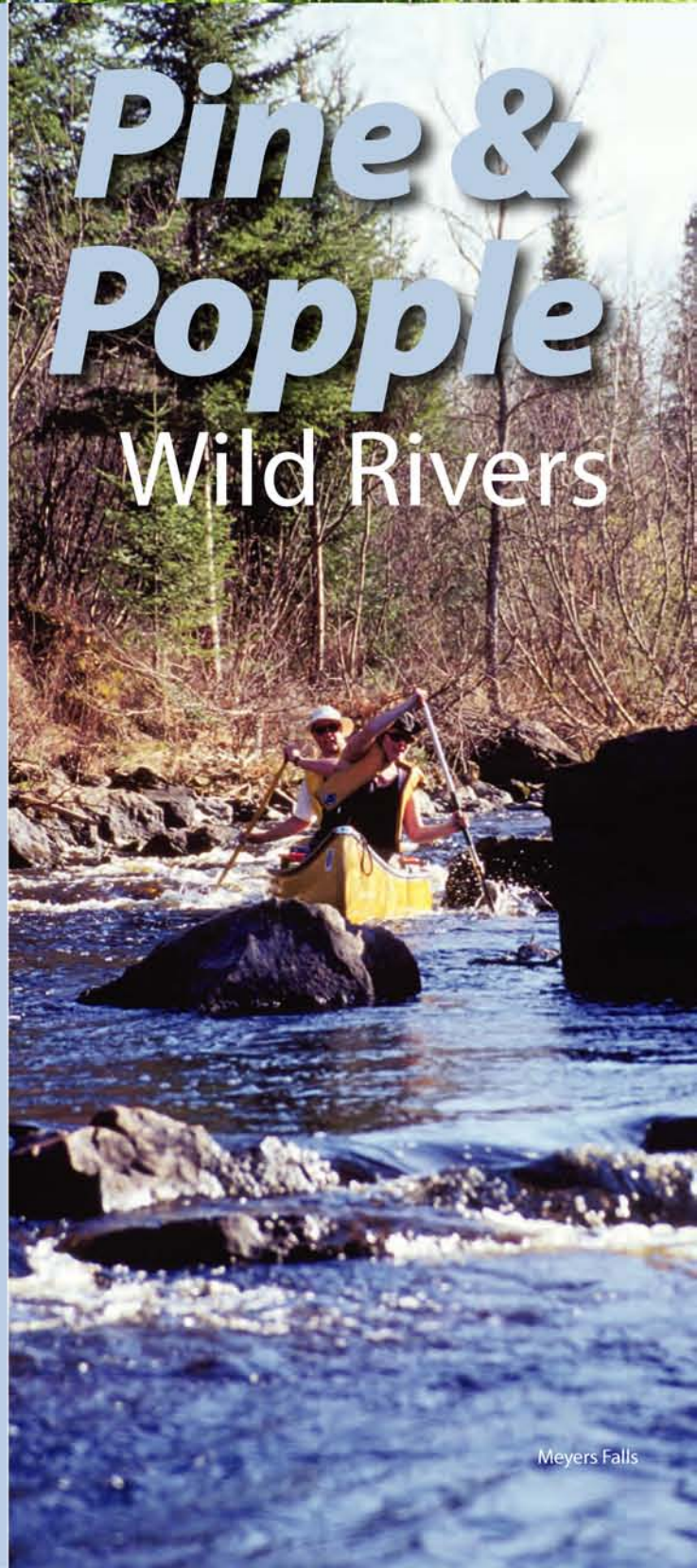
Pine & Popple
Wild Rivers


Meyers Falls

Pine-Popple Wild Rivers

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

To Crystal Falls, MI
FLORENCE NATURAL RESOURCE CENTER
FLORENCE
COMMONWEALTH
MICHIGAN
To Iron Mtn, MI
WHISKER LAKE WILDERNESS
Perch Lake Campground
To State Highway 139
FOX MAPLE WOODS SNA
Lauterman Lake Walk-in Campsites
Chipmunk Rapids
Chipmunk Rapids Campground
Lost Lake Campground
Snake Tail Rapids
Bull Falls
Meyers Falls
ROBAGO-SAVAGE LAKES SNA
HALEY CREEK SWAMP SNA
Keyes Lake County Park
Lake Emily Campground
Apple-Pine Campsite
Warning: La Salle Falls is very powerful and should be approached with caution!
La Salle Falls & Rapids
Campground #34
Pine River Dam
Lower Oxbow Campground
SPREAD EAGLE BARRENS STATE NATURAL AREA
SPREAD EAGLE BARRENS SNA
Jennings Falls & Rapids
Trailhead
Campground #24
Washburn Falls
Big Bull Falls
Nine Day Rapids
Big Murphy Rapids
Little Bull Falls
Nine Day Campsite
West Bass Lake Campground
Scout Lake Campground
Bass Lake Campground
Morgan Lake Campground
To US Highway 8
NICOLET
NATIONAL
FOREST
FENCE
MICHIGAN

Camp Areas

Primitive Campsites
- State

Campgrounds
- WE Energies
- County
- National Forest

Facilities

- Falls/Rapids
- Portage/Trail
- Trailhead
- Scenic Overlook
- Wayside
- No Vehicles Beyond Point

Roads

- US Highway
- State Highway
- County Highway

Watercraft Access

- Water Access
- Water Access *Limited Parking*
- Parking Area

Land Management

- County Park
- County Forest
- DNR Managed
- DNR Easements
- National Forest
- State Natural Area (SNA)

- Paved Road
- Unpaved Road

MICHIGAN
Vilas, Florence, Oneida, Forest, Lincoln, Langlade, Marinette, Marathon, Menominee, Oconto, Shawano, Door, Portage, Wood, Waupaca, Outagamie, Brown, Kewaunee

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