

Greetings, everyone-

Hot water mixed with brown sugar has never tasted this good. Hello from the canoe trip! we are 175 miles into our 550+ mile journey down the Mississippi river. At 600 paddle strokes a mile, that's over 105,000 paddle strokes per person.

This is our first encounter with society since leaving scattergood on the 24th. Since then we have spent 8 days on the river, paddling through rapids, swamp, culverts, swamp, lakes, swamp, forest, swamp, and swamp. We also paddled through swamp! the weather forecast has remained grim since day 2. Northern Minnesota took us back in time, to the early early spring (winter). The scenery became less and less colorful, the temperature dropped like a rock through the atmosphere, and clouds obscured the sun; harbingers of the thousands of gallons of ice cold water that would fall onto us from the sky above. This caused loss of mind, mild hypothermia, butter cravings, meat cravings from the oddest of people (Sophia) oddly colored skin, and general lack of positive mental thoughts. The constant downpour even occasionally got to the most positive of us (Colby).

The wildlife has been exquisite. sometimes, so exquisite that we get distracted from our goal, and go on 3 mile lake crossings with headwinds, only to find we made a wrong turn, thanks a lot pelicans. Some of the critters we have seen include, but are not limited to; Otters, Turtles, Eagles, Beavers (alive or dead), eagles, herons, eagles, mink, pelicans, eagles, fish, ospreys, muskrats, eagles, various small birds, pine marten, eagles, and frogs.

We put in at the headwaters of the "mighty" Mississippi. So mighty, in fact, that there was the ever-present fear of falling in and getting our toes damp. After going through a nice forest, we reached the swamp. Imagine a if you will, a square mile of mud, cattails, leeches, and the natural embodiment of sorrow. Now choose a course through this square mile, which has the most twists, the most turns, and the longest possible distance covered. Now, instead of 1 square mile, take 150. Welcome to the canoe trip.

Day 5; we wake up and stare across a wide expanse of water. At 10 miles across, lake Winnibigoshish is the largest lake on our journey, and the 5th largest lake in Minnesota (out of 10,000). We had been warned profusely, by many canoeing professionals, various family members, our guide map, various caution signs located nearby, and journals of people who had done the same journey; to not, whatever we do, go straight across. We gather, we plan our journey around the edge. As we set out into the lake, Sam Taylor, our voice of reason, says "man, the lake looks just like a bathtub", and like that, all warnings, previous plans, and precautionary tales are forgotten, they were telling us no, but the weather was telling us yes, the sun was shining for the first time in 4 days. It looked perfect (from the edge), the wind was behind us, and we were full of ourselves. It seemed like a great opportunity, 10 miles instead of 20! obviously a harmless shortcut.

Fast forward one hour, we are now directly in the middle of lake Winnibigoshish, 5 miles from the nearest shoreline. Near 5 foot waves surround us, and the wind is buffeting us in any direction it chooses. half an hour previously, the sun disappeared behind a tower of violent clouds, wind, and rain. We escaped the clutches of the lake, but just barely, when we got to shore, we felt a bit celebratory, as you can probably imagine. We felt pretty darn cool. Cool enough for chest bumps! During this celebratory time, there were more accidents then during the previous 2 hours crossing the lake (Sophia).

Sitting in the Grand Rapids Library, we are preparing the first of our educational and fun presentations. It should be an experience, as we are already famous here in northern Minnesota. We have had various people hail from the riverbank, “are you the group from scattergood?” and so, the ‘voyeguers’ bid you adieu, until next time!

-The first segment, brought to you by Sophia and Sam C.