



Sierra Club, Shawnee Group

# Lower Big Muddy Canoe Adventure

August 24, 2002

You are invited to participate in the Shawnee Group's 2002 paddling adventure in Jackson County! Prepare yourself for a seldom-experienced, one-day outing along the lower Big Muddy River.

## Trip & Travel Details

Our Saturday trip will leave at 8:00 AM in Murphysboro from Riverside Park. We will paddle/float from southern Murphysboro and past Kinkaid Creek until we break for lunch at the Turkey Bayou-Oakwood Bottoms Recreation Area that is part of the Green Tree Reservoir in the Shawnee National Forest. "This 3,400-acre track is one of the last bottomland hardwood forests, land that was once part of the largest expanse of forest and wetlands on the continent. The Pin Oak tree was one vital remaining link to these original lower alluvial Mississippi Valley lands. Through collaborative efforts, native trees were replanted, and the area once again has become a major stop for migrating waterfowl."

In the afternoon we will paddle past Little Grand Canyon through the oxbows of the southern half of the Reservoir where the river forms the border between Grand Tower and Pomona Townships. Upon exiting the Reservoir, the river is bordered on the west by the Big Muddy River County Levee road that protects the bottomland farms in the "claw" of land below Grand Tower. On the east are the bluffs of the Clear Springs Wilderness and LaRue Pine Hills. Depending upon the river flow rate and weather, the trip will end at State Hwy 3 or along the levee road.



**Murphysboro Township**



**Grand Tower Township**

See reverse side for full river map

## About the Big Muddy

The river is about 160 miles long and drains 1,500,100 acres in Washington, Jefferson, Perry, Franklin, Jackson and Williamson counties. It begins north of Mt. Vernon, is fed by six major tributaries (Casey Fork, the Middle Fork Big Muddy, Little Muddy Rivers, Crab Orchard and Beaucoup Creeks) before it empties into the Mississippi River a few miles south of Grand Tower. The drainage basin includes Rend Lake, Crab Orchard Lake and Kinkaid Lake, as well as the cities of Mt. Vernon, Benton, West Frankfort, Marion, Herrin, DuQuoin, Carbondale and Murphysboro. According to the IEPA, stream quality is only fair due to agricultural practices, mining and municipalities. Major fish species include bluegill, channel catfish, suckers and drum.

The Kaskaskia Nation, a sub-tribe of the Illini, lived in the area near the junction of Kinkaid Creek and the Big Muddy River. Later, other remnants of the Cahokias, Mitchiegamies, Peorias and Tamaroas joined the Kaskaskia. But around 1830, the indians left the region. Rock carvings made by these early residents can be found near Ava, Fountain Bluff, and Cedar Creek and in caves along the Mississippi River.

## Costs

The only direct cost for the trip is the canoe rental \$20, if needed, and your own food/beverages for the trip duration.

## Reservations

Advance reservation and payment are expected before August 15<sup>th</sup> and full refunds once the trip begins may not be possible. Call Bob Pauls, 549-9408 evenings or <mailto:sg618@yahoo.com>. Trip participation is subject to leader approval. Additional trip details will be provided upon trip approval and payment.

## What to Bring

- Canoeing Shorts/Swimsuit (swimming is discouraged!) and Long-sleeved Shirt
- Canoe Shoes, not Sandals
- Water Bottles or Hydration System (~2 qt. size)
- Sunglasses and Eyeglass Straps
- Medications, Lip Screen & Sunscreen (Rated at least 30 SPF)
- Sun Protection Hat!
- Backpack or Waterproof Bag
- Bandana
- Small Towel
- Insect Repellent
- Cooler for Refreshments
- Lashing Materials
- Camera, waterproof (optional)

## Some important species of the area

- **Bald Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
- **Small Whorled Pogonia** (*Isotria medeoloides*)
- **Bachman's Sparrow** (*Aimophila aestivalis*)
- **Henslow's Sparrow** (*Ammodramus henslowii*)
- **Loggerhead Shrike** (*Lanius ludovicianus migrans*)
- **Cerulean Warbler** (*Dendroica cerulea*)
- **Eastern Woodrat** (*Neotoma floridana*)
- **Copperbelly Water Snake** (*Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta*)
- **Hellbender** (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*)
- **Peregrine Falcon** (*Falco peregrinus*)
- **Alligator Snapping Turtle** (*Macrochelys temminckii*)
- **Black Cohosh** (*Cimicifuga rubifolia*)
- **Wolf's Spike Rush** (*Eleocharis wolfii*)
- **Butternut** (*Juglans cinerea*)
- **Starry Cleft Phlox** (*Phlox bifida* ssp. *stellaria*)
- **Lea's Bog Lichen** (*Phaeophyscia lean*)



Big Muddy's stream flow Conditions:  
<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/il/nwis/uv?05599490>