

Trip Report: Standley Lake Morning Paddle with the Birds: Sunday, June 13th, 2021

Standley Lake is a multi-use recreation and water-storage facility, serving as the drinking water supply for Westminster, Northglenn, and Thornton. With 1,063-acres of surface area, Standley is Westminster's largest body of water and the Denver metropolitan area's third largest reservoir. And it is a darn nice place to paddle on a Sunday morning!

Our trip had seven paddlers in three solo canoes, two tandems, and a kayak. The weather was perfect with warm temperatures and no wind. Since the recreation area banned motor boats in 2019, we had a peaceful paddle of about 2 miles, launching at the Pelican Cove beach and paddling along the western shore. Because of the ban on motor craft and after consulting with a water ranger, we could ignore the "No boats" bouys and paddle anywhere on the large lake. We kept to the western shore with its cottonwood trees, small islands, and several tiny inlets. The only boating restriction on the reservoir is to avoid landing in posted bald eagle habitat areas.

One highlight of the morning was paddling around Bird Island which hosts a cormorant and great blue heron rookery. Dozens of cormorants and a few great blues, including their young, hung out in the Bird Island trees. Other birds sighted were white pelicans, a few Canada geese, many cackling geese, red-winged blackbirds, a couple of mallards, and I'm sure we saw a robin or two. We did not see the resident bald eagles which we heard are rebuilding after their nest tree collapsed earlier this year.

If you go, be aware that the price of admission (\$10 per car, including one boat; \$5 additional per boat) includes a hot water bath for your boat. The spray for undesirables is mandatory, but it is a quick procedure although we had to take our boats off of our vehicles and place them on a rack. If you have time, visit the nature center with a variety of stuffed wildlife habitat exhibits and an active beehive.

