

Seedskaadee NWR and Section A below Flaming Gorge Reservoir- September 1-4, 2022

as reported by Karen A.

Pre-Paddle:

Kit and Henry were lined up to arrive on the Green River in Wyoming a day early to find an area of camping big enough for our group of 11. They went 1 better and arrived late on Tuesday, 2 days ahead of most people. There are 3 BLM camping areas below the Fonatanelle Reservoir Dam as well as dispersed camping and they picked a section of the Slate Creek Campground. We had a grill, some cottonwoods for shade, a bear proof dumpster and a vault toilet, but no water nor picnic tables. The campground was totally full on Friday of the Labor Day weekend, so our plan was good.



Here is an immature bald eagle in flight and a great horned owl in a tree in our camp:



We had about 1020cfs for our 3 days, and this section in and near the National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)

could have been rated Class I+; bigger water would have resulted in bigger waves in the several weirs (1st 1 pictured above) and then maybe the paddle would rate II-. Canoes and kayaks would be fine between 800 and 2000cfs. We actually saw dories making it through okay our first 2 days, but the 3rd day involved 3 braided sections and a dory would probably want at least 1400cfs.

We had 3 days in the low 90's, but accepted the heat as it came with almost no wind. 2 local people said that it is always windy, so maybe more research should be done before assuming that September will have tolerable winds. The club actually aborted a spring trip here about 8 years ago due to unreasonable winds.

Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge:

People are not able to camp in the NWR, so we did 3 day paddles on the following sections:

9-1 - 16 miles from Weeping Rock Campground to the Hay Farm ramp

9-2 - 18 miles from the Hay Farm Ramp to the Six Mile Hill ramp

9-3 - 10.5 miles from the Six Mile Hill ramp to the OCI Road bridge (also called highway 6)

On Day 1 we saw lots of osprey, bald eagles, white pelicans, 1 Trumpeter Swan and a couple of great blue herons. Day 2 again had numerous large birds (no swan) and we were treated to 3 moose lying in the water, including 1 being a bull with a rack. Also there were pronghorn, ducks, BIG fish, crayfish, and a nighthawk back in camp. Day 3 included the numerous birds again along with a 4th moose, a red fox, and 4 playful river otters. We saw several older beaver houses, but no sign of any living in the area currently.

Several people took pieces of the Auto Tours that generally followed along the top of the mesas near the rivers. We had campfires in the evenings, and Janet and Tracy serenaded us with their guitar-ukeleles. Our potluck with Henry and Karen using Dutch Ovens produced such good food that we did it 3 nights in a row. Here are some of the better photos:















After the Day 3 paddle we drove the 1.5 hours down to the Greendale campground - about 5 miles from the Flaming Gorge Dam - where we had 4 sites reserved but 1 was full of tents and powerboaters that returned from the lake quite late.

Section A below Flaming Gorge Reservoir:

We broke camp and got to the below-dam ramp at about 8:30 on Monday. While it seemed a bit crowded, we were told that there were not nearly as many fishing boats and people on the river as there had been earlier in the weekend. The pool drops were fairly exciting as we had about 2000cfs. The water levels drop down to about 1000cfs after midnight every day and come back up before dawn. Perhaps this reflects electricity usage.

We did fine through all of these man-made drops and then got into the natural rapids. On the 1 prior to Mother-in-Law, James and Cynthia got up on a flat rock and spun around fast enough to fling the bow paddler out. Tracy helped her get to shore and James maneuvered the half full of water boat to the shore as well. Everyone did fine in Mother-in-Law, so we can boast that there were no flips. James is contemplating finding a less flat boat so that they can handle the whitewater and make faster moves. Karen's Moisie handled the rapids well due to 4" of rocker and high freeboard; much better than the old/sold Freedom. The kayaks and 1 duckie were right at home.

Here are 2 photos from our whitewater morning on the Green in Utah:



