

## TRIP REPORT

Conestoga River, Brownstown to Perlman Park  
May 24, 2009

Nine LCC members met at the West Earl Township park on Stone Quarry Road at 10AM Sunday. After unloading boats and gear, we caravanned downriver to Perlman Park, then shuttled back to the put-in.

The boats were quite a mix. We had one C2, three whitewater kayaks, two recreational kayaks and two touring kayaks. Everyone bumped and scraped over the gravel bar below Groff's Creek, and from there down it was pretty smooth sailing to the Quarry Road/Bushong Road bridge. Before portaging the dam at the old mill, we took a break at the home of trip leader John Friel just upriver from the bridge for snacks, beverages, leg-stretching and pit stops.

The three whitewater kayakers played a bit at the foot of the dam, then caught up with the pack. A few small ledges and riffles afforded play spots, especially near the two covered bridges we passed under. The weather cooperated beautifully, with warm sunny conditions all the way.

The birdwatchers in the group were happy: We sighted Baltimore orioles, wood ducks, mallards, black ducks, Canada geese, a green heron, Eastern kingbirds, cedar waxwings, sandpipers, swallows, red-bellied woodpeckers and an osprey. We saw a couple of turtles sunning themselves. Somewhere below the Hunsicker Road covered bridge, those at the head of the group spotted a red fox on the river right bank. In the not-so-wild-life category, we also passed several herds of dairy cows cooling their udders in the stream.

This stretch of the river is very pretty and supports a surprising amount of wildlife considering its proximity to civilization. Seasonal cabins, some with docks, line the river-right bank below the confluence with Cocalico Creek. The river-left side is almost entirely farmland the whole way. Numerous houses, some quite grand, are to be found both above and below Quarry Road. Traffic on Route 222 is clearly heard at several points, especially where Butter Road runs beside the river, and the highway can be seen where it crosses the Cocalico. There is trash in and along the river -- styrofoam cups, soda cans, a large mass of plastic tubing, tires, etc.

All in all, though, it's a pleasant, relaxing, un-demanding paddle of probably 7 or 8 miles, with a short, easy shuttle and good parking at both ends. The portage at the dam is the most difficult task of the trip, and it takes less than ten minutes.

There were a couple of trees down here and there, but in each case there was a channel adequate to the task of carrying us around the obstruction. We encountered a few fishermen in the river, passing politely behind them so as not to interfere with their piscatorial pursuits.

At Perlman we found a large family group in rented canoes. They had all the good parking spots, so take-out was a bit problematic but we all managed. All boats were loaded and most participants on their way shortly after 2PM.

John Friel  
Nancy Parr

Tom Stapler  
Dick Swomley  
Jill \_\_\_\_\_?  
Ruth Daniels  
Don & Lynne Sterling  
Neil Donley