

Lafayette County River Landings

The wonderful thing about paddling in Lafayette County is there is **always** enough water in the Pecatonica River and the landings are **free** and **open to the public**. We've tried to include directions to a few of our favorite stretches here. Distances are approximate. See you on the river!

WEST BRANCH OF THE PECATONICA RIVER

County O to Calamine: Between Mineral Point & Darlington from Hwy 23 go 2 miles west on County G, ½ mile past Calamine to the bridge crossing the Pecatonica River. This is where you end. To get to the start turn Right (northwest) on County C 2.5 miles, then Right (north) again on County O. Put in at the Cty O bridge, downstream right. Nice limestone bluff on this stretch. End at Calamine, Cty G bridge landing on river right, **about 5 miles** downstream from where you started.

Calamine to Darlington: This is where the ~ **9 mile** Darlington Canoe Festival race begins every year, the first full weekend in June. Put in at the Cty G bridge just past Calamine. We drop a mountain bike in Darlington and use the Cheese Country Trail to bike the six miles back to our vehicle. On weekends you'll be sharing the packed gravel trail with ATV's and an occasional horse. The shuttle by road from Calamine is east a short distance on County G, east on Shortcut Road, and south on Highway 23. You can end in Darlington alongside Hwy 23 at Black Bridge Park on river left, or go a little further for scenic views from the river of the *only* courthouse built in the USA entirely from funds donated by one man. Paddle through a short stretch of Class 1 rapids/ riffles where an old mill race once was. Take out on river left at Collins Park, or continue downstream under the Main Street Bridge to the landing used for the Canoe Race on river left, before the supermarket. The great thing about ending in Darlington is you are only a short walk away from a great meal. Camping with electric sites is available on the river at Collins Park.

Roller Coaster Road to Well's Landing: Very nice bluff on the left on this **6.75 mile** stretch. From Darlington take Highway 81 East two miles to River's End Road. Right (south) on River's End Road ½ mile, then right again (west) on Roller Coaster Road about 1 mile to the bridge. Put in under the bridge. Shuttle from the bridge to Wells' Landing by road is 1 mile west on Roller Coaster Road to County Shop Road. Left (southeast) on County Shop Road, 1.5 miles to Red Rock Road. Left 1 mile on Red Rock Rd., then left (east) on Walnut Road for 1/2 mile back to the Pecatonica bridge and Wells' Landing. The Cheese Country Trail can also be used for this shuttle. It is 1/4 mile west of the two bridges and about a 4 mile run or bike ride.

Well's Landing to River Side Road: From Wells' Landing on Walnut Road go west ½ mile to Red Rock Road. Turn left (southwest) onto Red Rock Rd., go one mile to County K. Go straight on Cty K 2.5 miles to River Side Road. Turn left (east) onto River Side Road, landing is on the right about 200 yards. River paddle is **5 miles**.

River Side Road to Hwy 78 Landing: From the River Side Road Landing go west on River Side Road 200 yards to County K. Turn left (south) on County K 1 mile to Highway 11. Left (east) on Highway 11 through Gratiot, ½ mile to Highway 78. Turn left (northeast), drive 1.5 miles on Hwy 78. Turn onto a gravel drive on the left 200

yards west, or before you get to the bridge. This concrete landing is maintained by the local Sportsman Club and is a ¼ mile off Hwy 78. River paddle **5 miles**.

Hwy 78 Landing to Gratiot Sportsman Landing: From the Hwy 78 Landing go Northeast on Hwy 78, ½ mile to River Bend Road. Turn right (southeast) on River Bend Road for 3.5 miles. Landing is on the right. River paddle **6 miles**.

Gratiot Sportsman Landing to Co. Hwy D Landing: From Gratiot Sportsman Landing go east on River Bend Road 1 mile to Cnty Hwy D. Turn right (south) on Cnty D, 1.5 miles to the CO Hwy D Bridge. Takeout upstream left, steep banks. **7.5 miles** paddling.

Co Hwy D to Hwy 11 Landing (Browntown): Go south on Co Hwy D ¼ mile to Hwy 11 at South Wayne. Left (east) on Hwy 11, four miles to the Pecatonica bridge. Hwy 11 landing entrance is on the right, east of the river. The East & West branches of the Pecatonica River join during this stretch. **7.5 miles** paddling.

EAST BRANCH OF THE PECATONICA RIVER

Blanchardville to Argyle: The landing for this **14 mile** stretch of the river is below the dam in Blanchardville on County H, east of town. From Main Street in Blanchardville go north on Hwy 78 across the Pecatonica bridge turn right (east), ¼ mile to County H. East (straight) on Cty H ¼ mile, landing is on the right. Shuttle via Highway 78 from Blanchardville to Argyle. Deadfall can be a problem. **This trip can be cut in half** by using the bridge on River Road. From Hwy 78 between Blanchardville & Argyle go west on River Road, 1.5 miles to the River Road bridge, put in downstream right. Landing in Argyle is on the right alongside Highway 81, upstream from their dam. The dam at Argyle slows the current on the Pec so you can put in at the Argyle landing and paddle upstream and return to the same landing if you don't want to shuttle. This stretch borders the Yellowstone Golf Course so listen for the sound of "Fore"!

Argyle to Woodford: **7 mile** paddle. The landing in Argyle is 200 yards downstream of the dam on the river left (east) side of the river near the water treatment facility. The shuttle to Woodford is west ¼ mile from the Argyle bridge on Hwy 81 to Hwy 78. Go left (south) 4.5 miles on Hwy 78 to County M (Five Corners). Turn left (east) on Cty M, 1.5 miles to the bridge at Woodford. Landing is on the left. Two miles before Woodford the river winds through Black Hawk Park. There are two additional landings on the left in the park. Primitive camping is available.

Woodford to Cisserville Road: River paddle **6.75 miles**. From the Woodford bridge go east to the stop sign in Woodford. Turn right (south) on Cty M, 4.5 miles to Cisserville Road. Right on Cisserville Road ¼ mile to the landing on the right. With the dead fall in the river the locals call the first two miles of this stretch "Suicide Run."

Cisserville Road to Highway 11 Landing (Browntown): From the Cisserville landing go east on Cisserville Road ¼ mile to County M. Turn right (south) 2.5 miles to Highway 11. Landing entrance is directly across the road at Hwy 11. East & West Branches of the Pecatonica River merge on this stretch. River paddle **5 miles**.

FEVER (Galena) RIVER

The Fever River differs from the Pecatonica in that the water is faster and the bottom is sandy & rocky. Once it crosses into Illinois it becomes known as the Galena River and landowner permission is required to paddle on it.

County W to Buncombe Road: River paddle **5.5 miles.** The County W landing is 1 mile west of New Diggings. New Diggings, an early mining community, is located between Shullsburg and Benton. Off of Hwy 11, 4.5 miles west of Shullsburg or 4 miles east of Benton, go south on County I, 1.5 miles to County W. Turn right (west) on Cty W, 2.5 miles through colorful New Diggings to the Cty W Landing on the left. The shuttle is west on Cty W 1.5 miles to Buncombe Road. Go straight (south) on Buncombe Road 1.5 miles to a “T” in the road. Turn right (west) 1 mile to a farm driveway bridge. The takeout is on the river right at this bridge. About a mile into the paddle, look at the bluffs to the right. There is an abandoned RR tunnel miners later explored looking for lead. This is a fun stretch of river when there is enough water. Check water levels first at <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php> The Fever should be over 3 feet at the Buncombe Gauging Station before paddling this stretch and higher than that to avoid hitting rocks in the riffles.

Courtesy of Mike & Julianne Wiegel