
2022 Summer Canoe Landing Report

Brule River State Forest

By Jenn Janness

Summary

This year I employed the same strategies as last year as they seemed to be effective. I also implemented a few new education methods such as laminated cards with the dollar amount of each fine they could be required to pay if they are cited by a warden. I handed these out to people who were violating rules when I was not able to correct the behavior. For example, if people did not have life jackets and I did not have any PFDs available to lend them, I gave them a card to serve as an unofficial warning. I started doing this at the end of the summer and will see if it seems to be effective next year.

In addition, I have become familiar with some of the camp staff and youth group leaders who bring groups to paddle the river yearly. They have sought me out to make sure their groups hear the rules and to have their canoes checked for compliance. Some group leaders even contacted me to let me know future dates in the summer they would be bringing groups out.

My relationship with the canoe rental company has continued to be positive and enables me to get information from them about their clientele and where I will be most effective. It also has allowed me to make certain requests such as having ties available for securing coolers to canoes/kayaks and having extra life jackets in their vehicles for people who forget them. Some of the staff also let their customers know in advance that I will be talking to them and checking for compliance, so they know what to expect when they arrive at the landing.

2021: The strategies I utilized to educate the public regarding Bois Brule River rules, in addition to talking directly to people at the canoe landings, were developing a positive relationship with Brule River Canoe Rental staff, walking through the campgrounds and talking to people with canoes, kayaks, and fishing gear, and specifically engaging with children. This enabled me to expand my reach to people I may have missed at the canoe landings.

My general approach was to first talk to people preparing to go out on the river. I covered the topics that applied to them and then answered any questions. I checked to make sure each person had a wearable PFD, inspected coolers for glass, and then checked that beverages were secured in coolers and attached to the kayak or canoe. During times when the landings were especially busy, I focused on checking for PFDs, glass, and secured coolers while conveying the most important to each group. For example, when I spoke to youth groups, I would emphasize the importance of respecting others using the river and keeping their voices at a reasonable level. If people had fishing gear, I would make sure they understood the fishing regulations. When talking to any groups that had coolers full of beer, I emphasized keeping the river clean and keeping their voices down.

Another group I educated were people visiting the landings while planning future trips down the river. I was able to go over the rules with them while also providing them maps and other information to help them prepare. If I would see them later as they were going out on the river, I reinforced the rules a second time.

Data

Topics Covered Verbally

Month	Contacts	Beverages	PFDs	Fish Regs	Inflatables	Litter	Other (noise, designated landings, etc.)	Glass Found
June	681	495	481	49	19	469	650	3
July	1448	1069	1085	73	26	1164	1352	4
August	707	390	541	17	9	422	667	0
September	460	452	440	25	6	263	460	1
Totals	3296	2406	2547	164	60	2318	3129	8

Physical Information Given Out

Month	Fish regs	Visitor Info	Paddle Info	Explorer Books (kids)	Activity Books (kids)	Explorer Packs (check out)	Wild Card Sets	Other	PFDs
June	2	0	0	3	3	0	6	14	0
July	13	16	6	22	2	2	37	85	3
August	8	8	1	10	43	0	60	68	9
September	12	3	2	14	30	2	34	24	2
Totals	35	27	9	46	78	4	137	191	14

Overall Impressions

Again, most people I encountered were friendly and listened to the information I conveyed to them. In most cases, the people who would have violated the rules had I not approached them, simply were not aware of the rules. Locals and visitors expressed their appreciation on a regular basis. Many people commented that they hoped the program would continue.

Although I had contact with fewer people this year, I believe I provided better and more thorough information. I feel more confident in my knowledge of the rules on and off the river, as well as the history of the area. Since getting to know the rest of the Brule River State Forest staff better, I am more aware of who has certain expertise in different areas. If I don't know the answer to a question, I am able to direct people to someone who can.

I had one incident this year, which was a challenge, but felt I was able to handle it adequately. A man and his family observed the Park Ranger and I for quite some time at Stones Bridge. He began approaching other people at the landing and telling them that the DNR has no right to check their canoes. Most paddlers ignored him and allowed us to check. Some even commented that this man was out of line. He eventually approached us and went on and on telling us that the river belongs to everyone, and the government has no right to make or enforce rules. His wife stated that there should be a sign at the landing instead of staff explaining the rules. When I pointed out the sign, she got in her canoe and followed the rest of her family onto the river. I explained to him that no one is required to let me check their canoes and that I always pose it as a request, not a demand. I then walked away knowing that nothing I said would change his attitude. He then followed his family in his canoe. I let the warden know about the incident in case he caused problems later.

Again, this year I know I couldn't track everything. I will look into using a tally system or another way of tracking data. Ideally, tapping a button for each item I am tracking on a tablet instead of writing it down would probably work well, but tablets are not available to Park and Rec staff.

Other Accomplishments

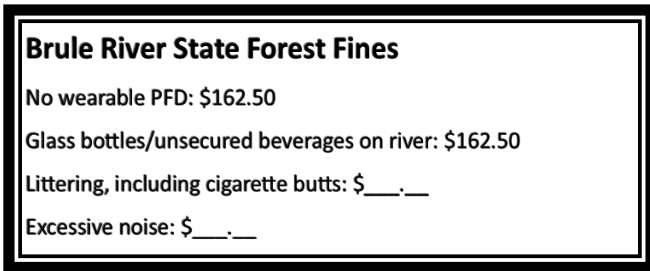
- Won the statewide "Above and Beyond" award for LTE staff.
- Worked with a graphic designer to update our publications and make our materials more visually appealing and easier to read. This is still an ongoing project.
- Installed a loading zone sign at Stones Bridge and informed the Brule River Canoe Rental that they cannot park their canoe trailer at the boat launch.
- Stained privacy fences and door frames around vault toilets
- Trimmed branches at landings
- Maintained clean vault toilets, landings, campground, angler lots, etc.
- Assisted with hanging reservation tags, checking money boxes, and refilling information at campgrounds and ranger station
- Made up sets of Wild Cards on rings with fish found in the Brule River to hand out. Encouraged families to visit ranger station and other state parks to get more Wild Cards
- Provided general customer service at and near the ranger station
- Put together activity bags for kids and handed them out at landings and campgrounds
- When notified that a youth group would be camping or canoeing, took age-appropriate items such as frisbees, nature booklets, or coloring books to hand out when talking to them about river rules.

Recommendations and Results

2021 (Items in bold are still recommendations)

- Contact Brule River Canoe Rental in spring and ask to arrange a time to speak to their entire staff at the beginning of the season to go over the rules of the river. **This was difficult as it was hard to get their staff in one place at one time, but Aaron introduced me to new staff as he brought them out to the landings.**
- Small tv tray type table to set up at landings with a "Landing Host" sign to put materials on and be a more visible presence. **Having a small table provided by Amy Abrams was very helpful! Much more information than was included on this report was distributed because people could just take what they wanted from the table. I am now looking for some sort of canopy or secure potable brochure holder to keep materials from blowing away in the wind.**
- Inform locals and guides in advance that a landing host will be checking canoes in kayaks. **This has happened just by getting to know people at the landings. Some locals just stop by the landings to say hello to me now.**
- Periodically collect additional data, potentially with the help of a volunteer or staff person. For example, one day per month track how many people are using the river independently or through the rental company. Note how many people through the rental company vs others would have violated rules had they not encountered the landing host. **This I am not sure how realistic this actually is, as it can be difficult to even capture the information I am currently tracking.**
- Be able to sell vehicle passes at landings when office is closed. **A mobile sales box has been created so stickers will be able to be sold at the landings going forward.**
- Brule River State Forest specific stickers or other souvenir items to sell or give away. This is something I was asked about multiple times by visitors. **Done!**
- **Obtain materials specifically for kids on paddling and/or river rules.**

- **Painting type ladder with shelf for cleaning supplies when cleaning ceilings and windows in bathrooms**
- **Signs with fines to put up at landings. See example below.**



2022 Recommendations

- Create large posters to put up at Brule River Canoe Rental and other businesses stating the rules.
- Recruit volunteers to help on weekends to have a presence at multiple landings.
- Add bike racks and canoe racks at landings to avoid bikes and canoes being chained to trees etc. while people shuttle.
- Obtain a windproof brochure stand or display for informational materials at the landings.
- Add cigarette butt receptacles add landings to help with cleanliness.
- Add picnic tables near bathrooms at Winneboujou to help avoid “traffic jams” of people stopping to eat lunch while others are trying to launch canoes.
- Only some of the laminated rule/wildlife cards have grommets so they can be tied to canoes. Add grommets to more of them to use next summer.
- Add information about aquatic invasive species to my spiel.

On a personal note...

My second summer working on the Bois Brule River was as wonderful as the first! I have gotten to know the area even better which makes me love it even more. I very much appreciate the local organizations that help fund my position. I feel very supported in the work I am doing by both local residents and the Brule River State Forest staff.