

Missisquoi Bay to Highgate Springs

Date: 9/22/2004

Distance: 18 miles

We went to Missisquoi Bay expecting to find the remnants of the toxic algae bloom that had kept humans and pets out of the water for most of August. Much to our surprise and delight the water was not covered with green goo. Now we need to learn what makes algae blooms go away. We saw the infamous and protected spiny soft shell turtles sitting on their specially built platform giving them a place to bask in the sun while the long delayed and much needed new Missisquoi bridge is being built.

The day was spectacular, with lots of fall color displayed by trees close to the water. We saw many herons. There is a large rockery in the Missisquoi delta, but we saw no Canada geese or ducks to speak of. Perhaps the ducks noticed the duck blinds being put in place in preparation for duck hunting season. We saw one small group of cormorants, 5 to 10 birds in total. There were also a fair number of bass fisherman taking advantage of the incredible weather, although according to their reports, the bass were not cooperating.

The lake level is so high that the shoreline appeared "squishy". It was impossible to tell where the water stopped and land started in the wide band of water reeds that buffer the shore. Margy played a game with the illusive shore, trying to paddle through as many reeds, and cutting as many corners as possible without running aground. Sometimes she would disappear out of sight only to pop out again down the shoreline. As a result of the water level, there were not many places to get out so we had a floating lunch, our lunches having been placed in an easily accessible place in our cockpits before we set off. No more locking them in an inaccessible kayak hatch! We have learned that lesson well! Margy noted that the last time she had been in this area the water level was lower and there were lots of exposed sandy beaches and sandbars. We paddled back from Highgate up Dead Creek to the Missisquoi River and then down the river to where we had left our car, a nice change of pace from paddling on the lake.