

2023



PINE RIVER FISHING PACKAGE



The North Pine River (aka Pine River) is arguably the best stream trout fishery in the Duck Mountain Escarpment. The river is easily accessible and attracts anglers of all ages, who come to enjoy the unique angling opportunities and stunning landscapes. The river originates at Pine River Lake and meanders eastward within the Duck Mountain Provincial Park, and through a variety of private and crown lands before eventually flowing into Lake Winnipegosis south of Pine Creek First Nation. Angling opportunities exist throughout the system and up into the many feeder tributaries of the river. The areas found with the best trout fishing opportunities and habitat exist between the First Crossing and Fourth Crossing within the Duck Mountain Escarpment. Opportunities are known to exist east of the Duck Mountains, however private land and access complicates the question of opportunity.



THE FISHERY:

The Pine River and its tributaries home naturalized populations of both brook trout and rainbow trout. The fishery is supplementally stocked with brook trout by the Manitoba Government on a regular basis. The primary stocking location is the bridge at Fourth Crossing, but the river is also stocked at Second Crossing on occasion. In 2018, SVSFE conducted presence/absence surveys in preparation for this document. Angling and backpack electrofishing were the primary methods of catchment. Targetable brook trout were found in all reaches of the river from First Crossing to the Fourth Crossing. Brook trout were also found in Clearwater Creek near Second Crossing and have been known to exist throughout this system up into Indian Creek. Smaller naturalized rainbow trout were identified near Second Crossing and Lovers Leap as well. In 2018, trout were not located downstream of the Fourth Crossing, however in years preceding these areas and pools were known to home very impressive brook and rainbow trout. The primary issue with angling these reaches is privately owned land and access locations.



Brook trout caught near Second Crossing



THE RIVER:

Beginning at the headwaters near Pine River Lake the river is generally slow moving and stagnant. Although there have never been angling reports of trout in these areas, it does not mean they do not exist there. From the culvert at First Crossing downstream is where targetable trout begin to frequent. The river through this stretch continues to Second Crossing and has some of the most unpressured areas of the entire system. The river through this stretch is narrow and travels through a steep ravine. Fallen trees and alders through this area can make foot travel difficult. Don't let this deter you, as this area is known to have hidden stretches with excellent pools and fishable trout habitat if you put the effort in. From Second Crossing to

Third Crossing is where foot travel along the river becomes tolerable. The river slows here, but travel is still not easy as the area generally lacks easily walkable sand and gravel bars. This stretch is known for its trout fishing opportunities which includes Clearwater Creek. From Third Crossing to Fourth Crossing the river slows yet again. In this stretch, exposed gravel bars become more frequent making river significantly easier to travel. This area is known to have some of the deepest holes and best trout habitat on the Pine River, however this stretch has also been known for large stretches of piled up woody debris, and significant beaver flooding - especially in the fall. Be aware as these types of barriers can slow travel time considerably. Beyond fourth crossing and continuing to highway 10 is a stretch where many folks consider the Pine River to be known for. There were apparently holes in this stretch that produced 5lb rainbow trout at one time. Today, this area is surrounded by Private Land, therefore if you intend to explore it be sure to attain relevant permission before travelling in these areas.

Disclaimer: In the spring of 2022, a high-water event in mid-May increased water levels to unfathomable levels. This flood event destroyed the bridges at Second Crossing and washed-out various culverts including the one at Highway 10 near Pine River, MB. This event changed the course of the Pine River throughout the escarpment in many ways that had not been completely understood by the time of compiling this fishing package. Many old fishing spots are believed to have disappeared, while many new spots have likely emerged.



Pool near Lover's Leap

PLANNING A TRIP



TIME OF YEAR:

In Manitoba, trout streams are closed to angling from November 1st to and including April 15th. In spring, high levels of discharge often make the rivers unfishable. Generally, by early-June flow has slowed and the water has cleared enough to allow safe travel. Angling opportunities exist from this point until November 1st. By late fall fishing quality seems to decrease when brook trout become focused on spawning and migrating to wintering areas. The best time of year to fish the Pine River is between mid-August and mid-October when the water starts to cool, and the bugs are becoming less abundant. It is not advisable to plan trips immediately following heavy rainfall events as water levels are known to increase considerably making travel and angling more difficult.



GETTING THERE AND AWAY:

The Pine River is accessed almost exclusively through the Pine River Road (Beaver Lake Road). The Pine River Road was used historically as a public access into the Duck Mountains, however in the late 1990s it was decommissioned because of unsafe infrastructure and limited budgets. The two bridges remained used by off-road vehicles and snowmobile clubs for the next 20 years until the high-water event in the spring of 2022 destroyed the two bridges at Second Crossing. In the fall of 2022, these bridges were completely removed and replaced by shallow water crossings. Today, the road is usable, however only with use of 4x4 vehicles as conditions can change considerably with any rainfall event. There are primary access locations in both the upper and lower reaches of the river. In the upper reaches, the best landing areas would be considered the Beaver Lake parking lot. In the lower reaches, there are two landing areas. The first is along the Pine River Road at the Fourth Crossing. Here there is ample parking and a picnic area. The second is at the Pine River Gravel Pit and provides access to Lovers Leap and the trout fishing opportunities in this area. From all these landing areas it is recommended to travel with either a 4-wheel drive vehicle, by foot, or bicycle. There are a variety of trails off the Pine River Road that provide access to the river itself and the fishing opportunities it provides. Be sure to use the maps provided in this fishing package to plan your next trip to the area. In 2022, these trails were travelled without issue. Utilizing digital river access information will enhance your experience and offers capabilities of adjusting your trip as need be. Data files are available in the form of .gpx or .kmz and can be uploaded onto smart devices or GPS units from the SVSFE website: www.swanvalleysportfishing.com/lakes/pine-river/





WHAT TO BRING:

The crucial consideration for any river expedition is to **pack light!** River trekking can be much more challenging than most would consider. Some vital gear to consider; trekking pole(s), good hiking boots with ankle support, quick dry pants, hiking and/or neoprene socks, good polarized sunglasses, compass, GPS or equivalent, emergency communications device, water filter, ice fishing/telescopic rod that can pack down easily, tackle of your choosing, bug control, survival/first aid kit, and miscellaneous backpacking/camping gear for overnight trips (sleeping bag, tent, tarp, hat, headlamp, dehydrated meals, etc.). Remember back country camping is not permitted within this area of the Duck Mountain Provincial Park. The Park boundary is clearly outlined in the Mapbook provided.



Somewhere between Third Crossing and Lover's Leap



FISHING:

When angling streams for brook trout the first places to look are areas with cover. Cover can come in many forms including depth, water turbulence, undercut banks, overhanging vegetation, boulders, and of course, instream woody debris. Perhaps the best advice would be to do more looking than actual fishing. In the Pine River brook trout are everywhere, but the shallower areas with little cover will be dominated with little guys. Larger, adult fish are usually found in the best habitats which include plunge pools on bends, large boulders, beneath downed trees, and beaver floods. There are no guarantees in stream trout fishing. On many occasions the best habitats will yield nothing (likely because of angling pressure and/or natural predators), while some of the smaller overlooked pools will yield the biggest trout of the day.

The next step is catching them, and the first consideration is what type of rod to use. Most anglers prefer a spinning rod, while some anglers prefer a fly rod. Bait and technique combinations are endless. From a fly-fishing perspective some of the best methods are using underhand pitches and bow-and-arrow type casting precisely into tight places with lots of cover. Local stream trout fly anglers say that the go-to flies include stone fly nymphs and caddisfly larva nymphs in spring/summer and terrestrial patterns in the fall. With regards to using spinning tackle, perhaps a simple worm on a hook with a splitshot has accounted for more brook trout than any spoon, spinner, and fly combined. Another tried and true method is a #0 in-line spinner or small spoon. Polarized sunglasses and the lightest possible line (6lb or less) will improve your success considerably.

Technique is arguably more important than lure selection. A common misconception is that stream trout are easy to catch; this could not be further from the truth. Approaching a potential fishing location should be done with care. After spotting a pool be as quiet as possible and avoid casting your shadow into the pool at all costs. Approaching from downstream often minimizes the risk of being spotted because fish are usually facing upstream ready to ambush incoming prey items. Try and precisely cast as close to the cover as possible. There have been endless times when anglers have stung a trout on the first cast because of an imperfect retrieve, and sent the fish into hiding. If you accidentally spook a pool, it could take at least a half-hour before the fish will consider biting again.



Rainbow Trout found downstream of Lover's Leap

TRIP OPTIONS

The Pine River provides many opportunities and different trip options. Create your own trip using the maps/data files provided or choose from the following. There are many different daytrip options but very few opportunities for multiday trips as backcountry camping is not permitted within The Duck Mountain Provincial Park.

1. The Upper Reaches

Difficulty: Strenuous

Summary: From the Beaver Lake landing area (parking lot), take your preferred method of travel and head east towards the First Crossing. The river parallels the Pine River Road from this point until Second Crossing. In this stretch the river sits within a steep ravine with many downed trees and alders. There are some hidden stretches with high quality fishing opportunities that receive very little fishing pressure. Accessing the river requires a bushwhack straight down the ravine to find the river, and once you're there travel won't be easy. Use a map to pinpoint a location that may have good trout habitat and give'r'.



2. The Middle Reaches

Difficulty: Easy-Moderate

Summary: Also known as “The Bridges” this is a probably the most visited area in the Pine River trout fishery. The bridges have now been taken out, but the fishing opportunities in this are still present. A variety of trails take you north and south off the Pine River road on all sides of the two crossings. Where Clearwater Creek enters the Pine River is probably the most popular fishing hole in the entire system. For the best results you should probably find unpressured spots in the area to have success. Enjoy this beautiful spot in the park and don't hesitate to explore up and into Clearwater Creek.



3. The Loop

Distance: 20km

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: 1 day

Summary: This route is a great option for those wanting to explore much of the river in one day. From Fourth crossing either head West into the Park, or south towards the Pine River Gravel Pit. This loop brings you to a variety of access locations and fishing spots throughout the Pine River system including Lover's Leap and the Pine River Trail. Stop and fish at the variety of access points or explore deeper to find some more unpressured areas. If planning on doing this in one day be sure to leave early to enjoy as much time on the river as possible. Camping is a possibility at Fourth Crossing aka "The Rocky River Campsite"



4. Lovers Leap

Distance: Out-n-Back

Difficulty: Easy-Moderate-Strenuous

Summary: This is one of the most popular access point on the Pine River. Perhaps the best part about it is you can drive a car to the Pine River Gravel Pit and from here it is just a short hike to Lovers Leap. Enjoy the view and excellent picnic spot. If you have fishing on your mind you'll have to scale down the massive cut-bank in order to reach the river. From here travel either upstream or downstream fishing the many holes and pools the river has to offer. The climb back up the cutbank can be very strenuous, however the view is worth it,



DISCLOSURE

The travel times in the package are estimated for folks with peak physical ability and good health. Anglers should be aware that a river kilometer is much different than a trail kilometer in terms of the effort/time required to travel it. It is highly recommended that before venturing out on any Pine River excursion, that you are well prepared and equipped with the proper gear to explore the backcountry. River distances on maps are distances between access points while trail distances are measurements between trail junctions.

It is important to remember that the roads and trails advertised in this package are used by many different land users and stakeholders. These include outfitters, trappers, logging operations, snowmobile user groups, and anglers alike. Travelling logging roads during times of active logging can be extremely dangerous. In these circumstances travel should not occur without the use of a radio to communicate with logging equipment and trucks. Local outfitters may also have active bear baits in the area. In Manitoba (Zone B), there are two bear seasons – late April – late June, and late August – early November. During these times it is strongly advised to refrain from travelling down unmarked side trails as they may lead to active bear baits. Trail etiquette is extremely important as well. This includes refraining from travelling down unmarked side trails, avoiding wet areas/rutting at all costs, packing out whatever litter you pack in, and respecting permitted structures on the land including warm-up shacks and trapper's cabins. Please note, there are several trails other than the ones illustrated on the maps. Downloading the data files will help users navigate as even some of the map trails are very grown over. If you come across a downed tree restricting travel, take time to remove and clean up the barrier - the other trail users will appreciate it.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

For up-to-date information on trail conditions, logging operations, and weather reports:

Swan River District Government Office

+1 (204) 734 3429

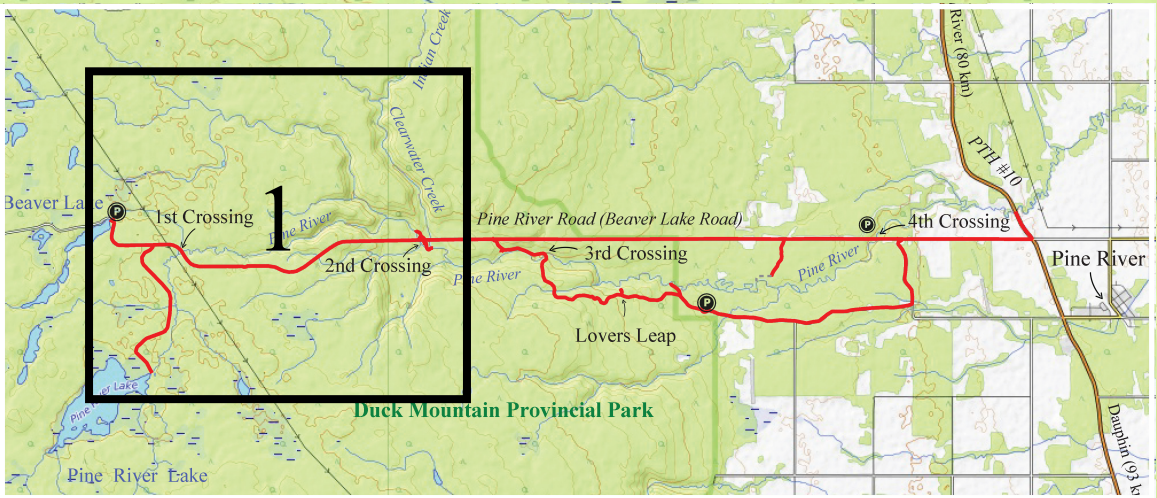
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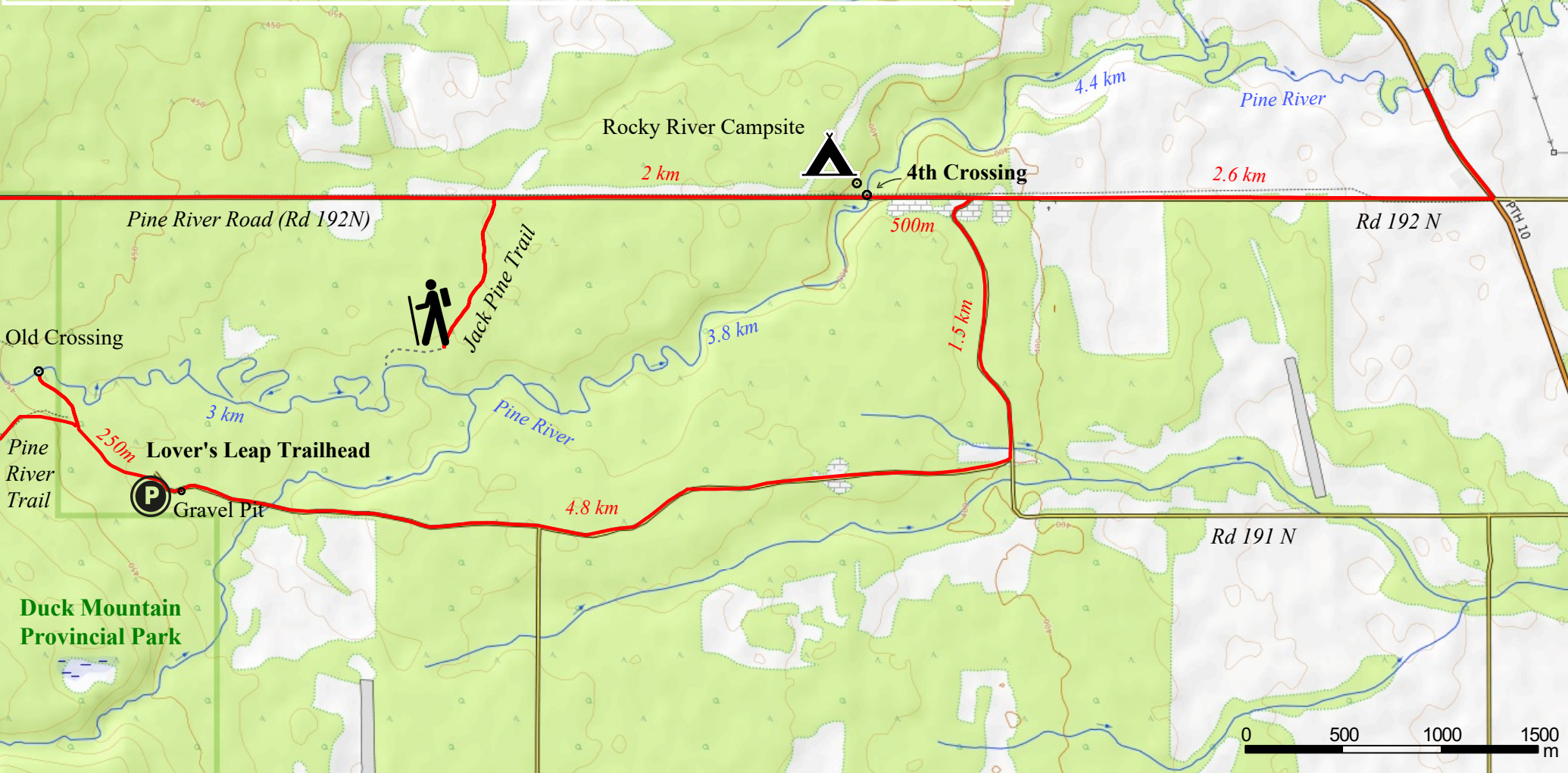
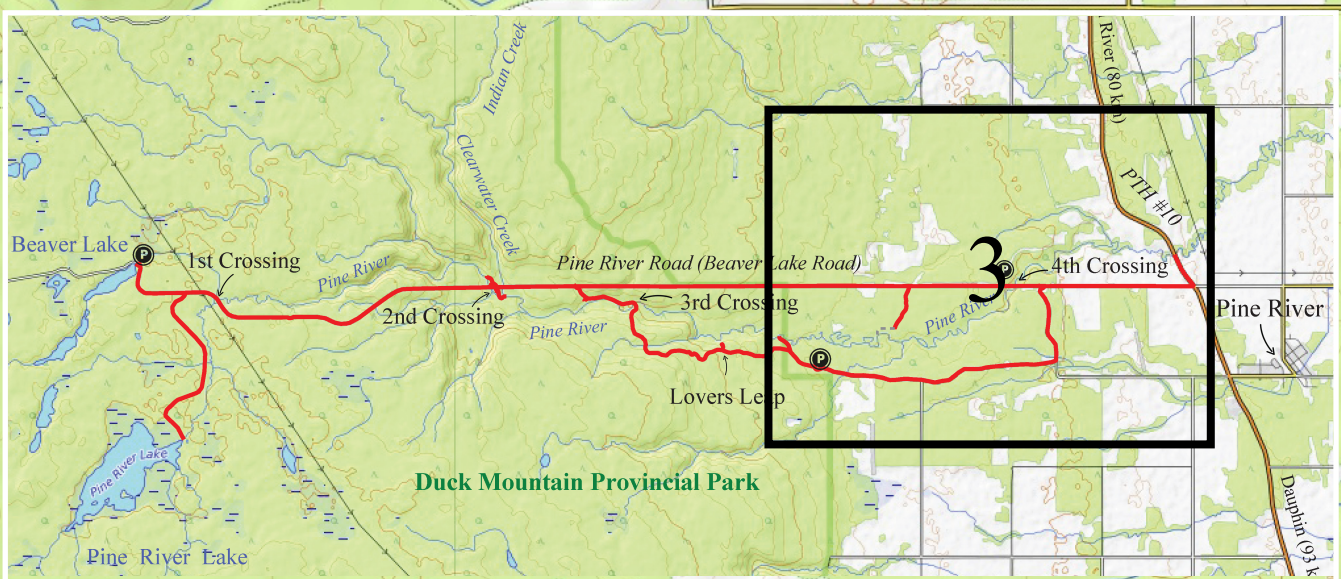
Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement Inc.

swanvalleysportfish@gmail.com

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