

Manistee River History

Early 19th century accounts of the forest cover along the Upper Manistee mention mixed conifer and hardwoods forests including a vast “superior” stand of White and Norway Pine. Evidence of early woodland settlements have been recorded near present-day Suicide Bend and the Pine River. History from the 18th century indicates that several bands of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians utilized the Manistee River area as hunting territory. Prehistoric people camped, hunted, gathered and fished along the river using the same flat, dry camp site with a good water source, that we camp at today. We are only continuing to use this land. How will your visit affect its future use?



Dam History

The Hodenpyl and Tippy Dams were constructed to provide hydroelectric power. Tippy Hydro-electric Plant was built from 1916-1918. Its construction is an earth embankments dam with reinforced concrete core walls and a concrete spillway. Originally “Junction Dam”, it was renamed Tippy Dam in 1934 in honor of Charles W. Tippy, a Consumers Power Company General Manager. Hodenpyl dam was built with similar construction from 1924-1925.

Logging

The earliest attempt to open the region to timber was made in 1832 by a group of men from Massachusetts, who came up river by boat to near present day Tippy Dam.

Early logging camp lumberjacks used “big wheels” and narrow gauge railroads to haul out the timber. The Manistee River was used as a highway to transport timber to the mills in Manistee. Extensive logging above High Bridge began around 1852. Log marks may still be seen on the ends of old logs along the banks and on the dead head logs in the water. Rollways still scar some hillsides and evidence of logging camps and dam construction towns may yet be seen. Remember all historic and prehistoric artifacts must be left and are protected by Federal law.

LEAVE NO TRACE SEVEN BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors



Fish & Wildlife



Your experience along the Manistee River may include encounters with a variety of wildlife and plant species. Wildlife such as bald eagles, red-shouldered hawks, trumpeter swans, black bears, river otters, and turtles may be seen or evidence of their presence discovered. Many of these species are secretive and sensitive to disturbance, so please view them from a distance. Fishing and hunting are two popular recreational opportunities that occur here at various times of the year. We hope you enjoy these opportunities, respect the wildlife and their habitat, and respect others who are also in the area.



Habitat Enhancement

In the past, trees with root-wads attached were added to the river to decrease erosion along stream banks, and to improve habitat and diversity for fish, amphibians, reptiles, waterfowl, and furbearers. You may notice these Red Pine trees along the riverbanks.



Upper Manistee Dispersed Camping

Manistee Ranger Station
412 Red Apple Road
Manistee, MI 49660
(231) 723-2211 Voice
(231) 723-0124 TTY



FEES

There are no camping fees for the dispersed camping sites. However, a Huron-Manistee vehicle pass is required at Marilla Trailhead. Concessionaire at Seaton Creek charges a day use fee for parking lot. A Huron-Manistee vehicle pass is not required at Red Bridge.

CONSIDERATIONS

Camping is allowed on National Forest land at least 200 feet from water, river bluffs and hiking trails. No camping is allowed on islands in the Tippy backwaters except Government Island, Site 29 & 30.

Camp size is limited to eight or less to reduce resource impacts. Larger groups please contact the Manistee Ranger Station.

Care should be taken to keep the area clean and in the condition it was found, so visitors are asked to please pack out what they pack in.

Barrier posts, berms and gates may not be driven around.

Many campsites are accessible by water, others may be reached by two-track or hiking trails. Some two track roads are not recommended for passenger vehicles or towed trailers, such as Government's Landing access road or South Slagle Creek Road.

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Upper Manistee dispersed campsites are primitive campsites located along the banks of the Manistee River between Tippy Dam and Hodenpyl Dam. The outdoor enthusiast will enjoy a rustic camping experience enhanced by the scenic river, peace and solitude, and abundant wildlife. Some of the sites are accessible by two track roads and other campsites are hike or paddle in only (see map).

LOCATION

Campsites are located in Manistee County, Michigan. The nearest community is Mesick to the north and Wellston from the south.

ACCESS

Campsites 1-2 are located at the northern most section near Hodenpyl Dam.

Campsites 3-10 are located along the Manistee River trail.

Campsites 11-14 are located at the Red Bridge access site.

Campsites 15-20 are located on the east side of Tippy Dam Pond south of Red Bridge.

21-25 are located along the west side of the Tippy Dam Pond, 26-28 are at Government Landing.

Campsites 29 & 30 are located on Government Island and are accessible by boat only.

Campsites 31,32 & 41 are located on the south of Tippy Dam Pond.

Campsites 33-40 are located on the north banks of Tippy Dam Pond.

FACILITIES AVAILABLE

41 Numbered campsites

41 Fire rings

2 Vault toilet buildings

(Located at Red Bridge & Government Landing)

1 Hand pump

(Located at Red Bridge)

SEASON

The campsites are open year round unless closed by snowfall.