

# MENOMINEE RIVER (ME1)

**Put-in** Mill Street Landing, Niagara, WI  
**Take-out** Piers Gorge Road Landing, MI  
**Distance** 2.9 miles  
**Approximate Time** Varies  
**Most Difficult Rapids** Class 4

**Elevation Drop** 40 feet  
**Average Gradient** 13.8 feet per mile  
**Minimum Suggested Flow** 600 cfs  
**Water Level Info / Phone** Little Quinnesec Falls Dam  
 715.251.8230

## Paddler's Notes

### Suggested River Levels for Paddling

The following river level information is geared towards advanced and expert level whitewater enthusiasts. Intermediate paddlers should avoid paddling Piers Gorge above 1400 cfs. Powerful hydraulics in the gorge can be easy to underestimate.

**Water levels rise rapidly during a dam release! Scout the river before you paddle and know your limitations!**



|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Below 600 cfs</b>        | Paddling not recommended. River level rarely in this range!  |
| <b>600 cfs to 800 cfs</b>   | Low runnable flow, a 'creek-boat' experience. Intermediate whitewater paddlers will enjoy the river at these levels. Rapids throughout are in the class II to class III range. 4th Pier is undeveloped. Follow the main channel of flow for best conditions.   |
| <b>800 cfs to 1400 cfs</b>  | Rapids in 3rd and 2nd Piers are class III & will push the skills of intermediates, especially at the high end of this range. Low to medium runnable flow for an enjoyable experience for advanced/expert paddlers. 4th Pier is still undeveloped. Chicken Ender can be a lot fun for expanding your vertical play skills. Follow the main channel of flow for best conditions.       |
| <b>1400 cfs to 1800 cfs</b> | Intermediate paddlers should avoid the river, mistakes compound quickly in 3rd & 2nd Piers. Medium runnable flow for an enjoyable experience for advanced/expert paddlers. Playspots at 4th Pier are starting to develop, will open up more at higher ranges. 3rd Pier is approaching class IV. 2nd Pier is class III with fun waves developing. Exercise caution in lee of VW Rock! |
| <b>1800 cfs to 2400 cfs</b> | Intermediate paddlers avoid the river. Excellent flow range for advanced/expert paddlers, worth the trip. Fun surfing waves & holes start to develop at 4th Pier. 3rd Pier is class IV. Pushy waves develop at 3rd Pier & 2nd Pier at high end of this range. Exercise caution in lee of VW Rock!  |
| <b>2400 cfs to 3000 cfs</b> | Above normal flows. The river will provide a nice adrenaline charge! Waves are 'heavy'/pushy inside the gorge proper, from 3rd Pier to below 2nd Pier. 3rd Pier is class IV. Terminal Surfer (class III+) becomes dangerous & very sticky in this range, the hydraulics here can stop large rafts.   |
| <b>3000 cfs to 5000 cfs</b> | Above normal flows. Kemosabe & Shallow Hal are running at 4th Pier. Powerful hydraulics & big, pushy waves throughout 3rd, 2nd & 1st Piers. Several holes become very sticky & difficult to exit. It is recommended that you not paddle Piers Gorge unless you've run it at lower levels.  |
| <b>Above 5000 cfs</b>       | Rare, unusually high flows. The 4 Piers are running full blast with huge & very powerful waves. Several holes are very difficult to exit. Do not paddle Piers Gorge unless you've run it at lower levels.  |

**90.5 Mile** **Mill Street Landing, Niagara** **River:** The river flows wide and moderately fast as it passes scenic, high cliffs on the left bank. Homes dot the right bank for the first mile or so. **Shuttle:** In Niagara, on River Road (Highway 141), turn north onto Pine Street and you will see the parking area straight ahead. A small park overlooks the river with beautiful views of the cliffs on the Michigan side. A cement walkway leads down to river. Hand carry access, parking, trailer turnaround, pit toilet.

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**89.0 Mile 4th Pier, Sand Portage Falls (Class 2-3)** The river passes an old mill on the left bank before splitting around a small island. The main channel flows down the wide right fork. Rapids begin in the main channel near the lee of the island with plenty of fun wave action.

The best waves occurs at levels above 1800 cfs. At these levels, several fun surfing waves develop down the left fork, near the lee of the island, just above where the two channels converge. The first is a fun surf-wave known as 'Lone Ranger'. At around 3000 cfs, a fun surf wave named 'Kemosabe' develops below Lone Ranger. A hole called 'Shallow Hal' also develops in this range, just below Kemosabe. Shallow Hal changes it's character in high water and becomes known by an entirely different name, "Wave 47" (4700 cfs). Playboaters love this wave!

Meanwhile, below the lead-in waves in the main channel on river right, is another hole named 'Bloody Knuckles'. This shallow, bouncy feature was given its name for good reason, and should probably be avoided until you've had a chance to watch others playing in it. Above 3500 cfs the force of the hydraulics in the hole makes boat control very difficult. The waves river-left of the hole are especially shallow and if you're not careful you'll likely end up with bruised hands and some nasty bloody knuckles.

On right left, below Bloody Knuckles and just off the point where the river bends left, is a hole named 'EZ Loving'. This spot is great for practicing your spin moves.

**88.3 Mile Beach** Below Sand Portage Falls, the river bends left under a powerline then goes straight for a while before entering a wide right bend. A small beach (low to medium flows) on the left bank is a good place to land and scout the falls and rapids ahead. The river constricts and the current becomes very fast as you approach the drop at Missicot Falls. Class 1 waves begin in the right bend and continue to the falls.

**88.1 Mile 3rd Pier, Missicot Falls (Class 4)** Granite cliffs surround the river where the horizon line marks the drop of Missicot Falls, you'll certainly hear the roar from the falls as you approach. At Missicot, the river constricts and drops 8 to 10 feet in a thunderous cascade over a submerged ledge that spans almost the entire width of the river. The left side has dangerous, exposed boulders (low to medium flows) that you should avoid. The main chute is down the right, where the flow funnels from right to left. There are fun waves and potentially scary holes at the base of the drop. An exciting, huge, submerged boulder known as 'Volkswagen Rock' lies a short ways below the inverted 'V' of the main drop, river right. Some kayakers will try to jump this rock when water levels reach 2500 cfs or higher, but be wary of the hole in the lee of Volkswagen, at the base of the rock, it's shallow!

More large waves follow the Falls with the main flow rushing down center-right until hitting a sharp right bend where it pushes up against a granite wall on river left. Missicot Falls are the most difficult part of this run.

**88.0 Mile Whirlpool Rapids, Cudaghi Island, Chicken-Ender (Class 3)** Downstream of Missicot Falls and Volkswagen Rock is a stretch of 'swirling' whitewater named **Whirlpool Rapids**. River-right of Whirlpool Rapids is a rocky ledge that forms a small island named **Cudaghi Island**. An eddy is river-right of the tiny island. Just below Cudaghi is a deep, awesome hole known as **Chicken-Ender**. This is an excellent spot to practice your vertical tricks. There are often huge surfing waves around and below Cudaghi Island in medium to high flows.

**88.0 Mile 2nd Pier, 2 Sisters (Class 3)** Thirty yards after 'Cudaghi Island' is a diagonal, submerged ledge that creates a 4-5 foot drop that spans the river. The diagonal feeds into a hole known as **'Justin's Bane'**. The current just rips through here! A large wave and two deep holes in rapid succession quickly follow. The two holes are called **'2 Sisters'**. Nose into the second hole of 2 Sisters and if you can 'stay and play' more than 30 seconds at around +/- 2000 cfs, then you're doin' ok!

**87.9 Mile Rapids (Class 2)** A wavy rapids occur in a left bend below 2 Sisters. After the action upstream you may not even notice. The river widens and slows considerably after the rapids.

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**87.8 Mile 1st Pier, Terminal Surfer (Class 3)** Terminal Surfer is a wide, deep hole just right of center formed by a submerged ledge that extends into the river from the left bank. The hole is very easy to underestimate and cannot be seen until you're right in it. You should avoid Terminal Surfer by paddling down the right. Under no circumstances should you enter the hole without first scouting it. Powerful hydraulics on the left (north) side of the hole have a tendency to scare even the most experienced kayakers. Scout from the left bank. There is often a low, rocky shelf that extends out from the left bank from which to scout.

**87.6 Mile Piers Gorge Road Landing** **River:** The landing is about 200 yards past Terminal Surfer on the river left, downstream of a narrow slough. **Shuttle:** On Highway 8, north of the bridge, turn west onto Piers Gorge Road. The river access parking area is approximately one mile from the intersection, on the left. Hand carry access, parking, trailer turnaround.

## Driving Directions (Google Maps)



**Niagara, Mill Str Landing**



**Piers Gorge Road Access**

## GPS - NAD83 / WGS84

|                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Niagara, Mill Street Landing | 45.77032,-87.98863 |
| 4th Pier, Sand Portage Falls | 45.76020,-87.96450 |
| 3rd Pier, Missicot Falls     | 45.75790,-87.94910 |
| 1st Pier, Terminal Surfer    | 45.75766,-87.94252 |
| Piers Gorge Rd Landing       | 45.75834,-87.93907 |