

# PESHTIGO RIVER (P3)

**Put-in** Burnt Bridge  
**Take-out** Goodman Park  
**Distance** 12.5 miles  
**Approximate Time** 5-6 hours  
**Most Difficult Rapids** Class 3 (4)

**Elevation Drop** 190 feet  
**Average Gradient** 15.2 feet per mile  
**Minimum Suggested Flow** 4.5 feet @ County C Bridge (USGS Gauge)  
**Water Level Info / Phone** Contact local outfitter

## Paddler's Notes

### Suggested River Levels for Paddling

The river gauge is 14 miles downstream from this segment. So, while this gauge provides a very good indicator of the general height of the river, the reading should only be considered as an estimate of the conditions in this reach. At higher levels, several of the rapids become more difficult; and strainers and deadfall become more of a hazard when present. (Numbers in parenthesis reference the Paddler's Gauge at Highway C)

**Scout the rapids and know your limitations!**



<b>Below 4.5 feet</b>	(Below 6) Paddling not recommended.
<b>4.5 feet to 5.0 feet</b>	(6 - 12) Low runnable flow. Some rapids may be bony at the lower end of this range, though all rapids should be navigable.
<b>5.0 feet to 6.0 feet</b>	(12 - 24) Medium runnable flow. Should be excellent paddling conditions in the rapids.
<b>6.0 feet to 6.5 feet</b>	(24 - 30) Medium-high runnable flow.
<b>6.5 feet to 7.5 feet</b>	(30 - 42) High runnable flow for safe paddling conditions. Several pitches of Upper Dells Rapids & Mac Tackie Rapids are approaching class III. Deadfall & strainers are especially hazardous when present in narrow channels!
<b>Above 7.5 feet</b>	(Above 42) Rare, unusually high flows. Exercise caution if you paddle the river in this range. Mistakes compound quickly.

**105.3 Mile Burnt Bridge Landing, Canoe/Kayak Camping** **River:** For the first 0.4 mile, the river flows past several small islands and through sporadic riffles and quiet pools. **Shuttle:** On Michigan Creek Road, the access is west of the bridge. There are two rustic campsites located below the bridge, one on each side of the river. Hand carry access, parking, trailer turnaround.

**104.9 Mile Armstrong Creek** The wide mouth of the creek is on river left.

**104.8 Mile Rapids (Class 1)** The river constricts into a short rapids, then widens into a large pool.

**104.5 Mile Michigan Rapids (Class 3)** In a left bend, the river slows into a wide pool as you approach a small island. The island may be hard to pick out because debris normally chokes the entrance to the right channel. The left channel forms a horizon line as the river constricts and drops over the first ledge of Michigan Rapids. The initial pitch is the most difficult, the river drops more than ten feet in the first forty yards.

After the initial pitch, the rapids become a more manageable class 2-3 (*medium flows*), and continue for nearly a half mile. Changing water levels dramatically alter the character of the whitewater. In low water the run is very scrappy; in high water the rapids will feature numerous class 3 waves with lots of speed. It is best to scout the first pitch from the island and the lower pitch from the path on the left bank. The easiest portage route to bypass the first pitch is on the right bank.

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- 104.0 Mile Michigan Creek** The creek enters from river right. Michigan Rapids ends near the mouth of the creek.
- 102.3 Mile Upper Dells Rapids (Class 2)** A long stretch of mostly class 2 rapids and boulder gardens. Some maneuvering may be required. The rapids can be difficult to scout. Several pitches of the rapids may produce class 3 waves in high water. Watch for strainers and deadfall.
- 101.7 Mile Dells Rapids / Ralton's Rip (Class 3)** After a brief stretch of riffles and flatwater, the river splits around a large island. The left fork will be bony in low flows, and will produce class 2 rapids in medium flows. The main channel runs down the right fork, where - just below the head of the island - you will paddle into a wide, rocky pool. The river then constricts and plunges into the Dells Rapids. The Dells run through a narrow gorge, and produce a fast, wavy, class 3 joyride in medium flows. Some maneuvering is required! Scout from the island and plan your route carefully. Look out for deadfall and strainers. In high flows, the Dells produce powerful waves approaching class IV.
- 100.9 Mile Mac Tackie Rapids (Class 2)** A long stretch (*0.9 mile*) of rapids and boulder gardens through several bends. A bony, class 1-2 boulder garden in low flows; medium to high flows produce several pitches of fun, wavy class 2 rapids.
- 99.6 Mile Rapids (Class 2)** A short, fun wavy rapid through a sharp right bend. Several homes and cottages are on the left bank.
- 99.0 Mile Burton Wells Bridge Landing, Canoe/Kayak Camping** **River:** After a left bend, the Burton Wells Bridge appears ahead. The landing is just below the bridge on river right. Some scrappy riffles run under the bridge. **Shuttle:** The landing is on Benson Lake Road, west of the Burton Wells Bridge. A primitive campsite is located next to the primary landing with a second, campsite landing just downstream. Trailer access, limited parking, trailer turnaround, pit toilet.
- 96.0 Miles Cooper Rapids (Class 2)** A 300 yard-long rapids in several pitches. A long, narrow island splits the river on the left in the final pitch. The river widens after the final pitch.
- 95.5 Miles First Benson Lake Road Landing** **River:** Shortly after Cooper Rapids, you will paddle past a small weedy island. The landing is on the river-left below the island, before a right bend. Benson Lake Road borders the river on the left bank. This is an easier take-out than the next landing down-river. Downstream, a set of rocky rapids are within sight of the landing. **Shuttle:** On Benson Lake Road, the access is near the Marinette County Forest Rd 1517 intersection. A short gravel access path is down a 10-foot embankment. Hand carry access, trailer turnaround, limited roadside parking.
- 95.4 Miles Rapids (Class 2)** A short pitch of rapids are in the main (*right*) channel around a pair of wooded islands. During medium to high flows these rapids can be wavy fun, but are unnavigable in low water.
- 94.9 Miles Second Benson Lake Road Landing** **River:** After the unnamed rapids, the river runs straight for a short while then bends right. The landing is on river left in the middle of the bend. A small opening in the weeds reveals a steep-sloped, gravel landing which leads up to Benson Lake Road. **Shuttle:** On Benson Lake Road, the landing is about 500 feet west of the Porcupine Lake Road intersection. A gravel path leads down a 15-foot embankment to the river. Hand carry access, trailer turn-around, limited parking.
- 93.8 Miles Rapids (Class 1)** After a stretch of flatwater and riffles (*medium flows*), the main channel flows river-left around a small wooded island, and forms a short pitch of rocky rapids.
- 93.7 Miles Third Benson Lake Road Landing** **River:** The landing is on river-left shortly after the rapids and next to several small, wooded islands. For advanced-level kayakers who are looking for a short, challenging action run this is a great put-in for Taylor Falls (class 3) and Strong Falls (class 4). **Shuttle:** The access is on Benson Lake Road, west of the Marinette County Rd 1510 intersection. A lovely shaded picnic spot with a fire ring is located here (permit required). Hand carry access, roadside parking.

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**93.5 Miles Taylor Falls (Class 3)** After passing a few small islands you should hear the roar of Taylor Falls from directly ahead. Only advanced-level paddlers should attempt this class 3+ rapid. Scout the falls from the right bank. Submerged boulders right before the first drop can affect your line through the rapid. In low to medium flows, you'll often need to maneuver fast to avoid rocks immediately below the initial drop. The best portage route is on the left bank. Watch your footing, the trails can be slippery!

**93.5 Miles Taylor Rapids (Class 2)** The wavy rapids begins just below Taylor Falls. Scout the rapids from the right bank. The rapids may 'wash-out' in higher flows.

**93.2 Miles Swede John Road Bridge** **River:** After Taylor Rapids, the river flows into a wide pool, then under the Swede John Road Bridge. After the bridge, the river forks around a small island. Follow the main channel down river-left. There are several short pitches of class 1 rapids between the bridge and Goodman Park. This is a very scenic area!

**92.8 Miles Goodman County Park Landing, Campground** **River:** The landing is on the left bank (river left) above Strong Falls, be sure to land before the footbridge! The Falls begin just below! You can land either at the cement wall or just above it, whichever is easiest. The park is an excellent spot to walk around and stretch your legs. There are several trails with footbridges over the river that offer scenic views of Strong Falls. **Shuttle:** On Goodman Park Road, south of the Benson Lake Road intersection, follow the road signs to the Park entrance. Park in the main lot and follow the wide trail past the cabins to the river. There is a \$3.00 per day (2015) vehicle fee if you are not camping in the park. Hand carry access, trailer turnaround, parking, picnic area, water, camping, pit toilets. .

Goodman Park is part of the Marinette County Park system. This beautiful, well-maintained park features a shady campground with 15 sites beneath tall stands of red pine, balsam fir, birch and sugar maple. Each site has a fire pit and picnic table. The park also has one group site, a day lodge, a cabin (sleeps 8) and a large picnic area. Amenities include water, pit toilets, dumping station, and firewood. Paddlers should try to camp in site # 9, which offers trailer parking and a footpath down to the river. Sites 8 thru 15 are also close to the river. For more info call Marinette County Parks at: 715-732-7530.

**92.8 Mile Strong Falls (Class 4)** For advanced-level kayakers, a successful run over Strong Falls can be a rewarding challenge. The river narrows and drops about six feet in a 10-yard stretch over several ledges. In lower flows you'll have to make fast turns after each drop; however, the ledges will be shallow and can be physically punishing, both to you and your boat. The falls present a much cleaner - and more challenging - run in medium to high flows (*over 5 ft on USGS Gauge / over +12 on Paddler's Gauge*), where multiple lines open up. At these levels, your best bet may be to go over the first small ledge on the far right, then cross to the center over a large main drop (*4'+, boofing drop!*) that should be pretty well-formed by a level of 5.2 feet (*+15 on the Paddlers Gauge*). A successful run of the falls at higher river levels is exhilarating.

If you attempt the falls at lower levels - certainly below 5 feet (*+12 on Paddler's Gauge*) - you should try to exit with the main flow as it crosses from left-to-right down the center! Be aware, there are several shallow boulders and ledges at the base of the falls (*right and left of center*) that could crack your boat if you hit them hard enough (*or your head if your upside-down!*). ***It is recommended that you not attempt the falls in low flows. Use sound judgement, if it looks too difficult, then it probably is.***

An open, shaded picnic area - Goodman Park - occupies the left bank next to the falls, which makes it easy to run Strong Falls over and over. The main drops of the falls rate class 4 and are easily scouted from the left bank.

Everyone should stop and land above, or along the stone wall on river left just above the falls. Scout, portage, or take-out from here. This is an easy portage and take-out spot. Goodman Park provides an excellent overnight camping stop on multi-day trips. The campground here has the most facilities of any along the upper Peshtigo and all of the campsites are reservable. And bring your camera! Not only are Strong Falls scenic, but there is a short trail system with boardwalks overlooking smaller waterfalls beneath tall cedars and conifers on the island next to the main drops of the falls.

# PESHTIGO RIVER (P3)

## Driving Directions (Google Maps)



**Burnt Bridge Landing**



**Burton Wells Bridge Landing**



**Benson Lake Rd  
Landing (2nd)**



**Swede John Rd Bridge  
Landing**



**Goodman Park Landing**

## GPS - NAD83 / WGS84

Burnt Bridge Landing	45.56226,-88.49554
Armstrong Creek	45.55935,-88.48908
Michigan Rapids	45.55537,-88.48706
Michigan Creek	45.54799,-88.48405
Upper Dells Rapids	45.54583,-88.45444
Dells Rapids	45.53833,-88.45360
Mac Tackie Rapids	45.53381,-88.44159
Burton Wells Bridge Landing	45.51164,-88.43509
Cooper Rapids	45.51931,-88.39771
1st Benson Lake Rd Landing	45.52366,-88.38963
2nd Benson Lake Rd Landing	45.52644,-88.38018
3rd Benson Lake Rd Landing	45.52277,-88.35721
Taylor Falls	45.52155,-88.35372
Swede John Rd Bridge	45.52013,-88.34891
Goodman Park Landing	45.51889,-88.34136