

Gators & Freighters Day 4:
Point Houmas to Paulina



Lower Mississippi River Dispatch No 211

**Posted Sunday, Oct 25, 2015 - from Poche
Park/Paulina (East Bank LBD149)**

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For the completion of the [www.rivergator.org](http://www.rivergator.org)

*1 million words describing the Middle & Lower Mississippi River.  
Written for paddlers and any others seeking the “wilderness within”*

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Recap: The paddlers continue down the Mississippi River into fierce headwinds and bands of rain lashing outwards from Hurricane Patricia... Ai-yai-yai-yai! Incredibly the remnants of Patricia have crossed Mexico towards Texas and are funneling winds and moisture our way! We are happy to be arriving with much needed precipitation in the Deep South, but the river conditions are getting crazy. Mark River continues the story below:

Day 4 - Point Houmas (RBD173) to Paulina (LBD149)

Photo-Essay by Mark River and Driftwood Johnnie

One of the private beaches found at Point Houmas

To avoid the Friday night local gathering on Point Houmas, we pick a camp site right before the point. A small oasis of the finest grain of sand,

with willow trees baring roots high on their trunks, as result of the unusual water levels this summer. At night when the wind blows, the roots look like skirts on hula dancers.



*Willow Roots Dancing in the Wind
(A sign of recent receded highwater)*

Another thing I've noticed, there's a huge population of beavers. Every sandbar shows evidence, but you don't see or hear them. They manage to thrive in this industrial haven, a place where predators are unlikely to hunt due to noise and people. They don't even perform their territorial tail splash. It's also better to be on the main channel away from all the alligators.



Pickup at muddy landing below the Sunshine Bridge

We get an early start so we can pick up writer, Mary Ann Sternberg, at the Sunshine Bridge. As we paddle around Houmas Point, a man and his young son are fishing from the sandbar. It was like seeing myself as a kid -- little bow-legs, a pop-belly, and a big head, standing by the fishing pole, and being impatient, "It's moving, Dad! It's Moving Dad!"

"No it's not," he would say. But I would keep repeating "It's moving, Dad! It's Moving Dad! There's something on there!"

And he would say, "okay, okay, reel it in." But nothing would be on there. And eventually he would run me off to go explore.



Paddling below College Point

We continue on to Burnside Bend, making our pick-up point. We paddle past the Sunshine Anchorage , a designated mooring spot for ocean-liners to anchor.



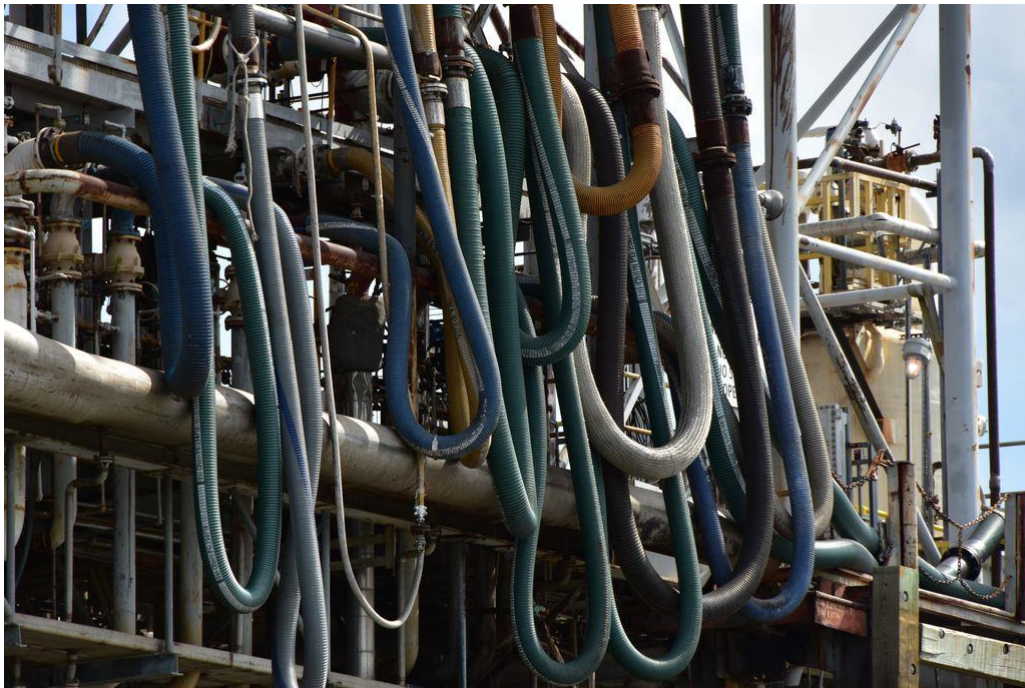
Paddling past one of the many moored Freighters

As we paddle on headed to St. Alice Bend, the head wind increases to 20 miles per hour, making us earn every bit of progress.



Paddling into Headwinds and past a curious Towboat Pilot

The river is so wide here, when the water is low, the wind predicts the conditions. We paddle hard and stop for lunch early at Wilton Landing. As we eat, it starts to rain.



Scene from one of the many Refinery Docks along the way

Back in the canoe, it rained throughout the day. Stopping occasionally, but returning harder. I get encouragement from the eagles, herons, egrets, and cormorants, as they continue on like nothings happening. We head towards Romeville Bend and see the steeples from St. Michael's Church (Convent, LA).



The huge complex at Zen-Noh Grain Corp

We make the Rich Bend Crossing , to Rich Bend, to College Point, and on to the Belmont Crossing. On the east bank is the town of Wallace and the west bank is Paulina.



This sign says it all!

As we come around the bend I see a sign that says, "Paddlers Welcome" at Magnolia Landing where we are greeted by the owner, Charlie Poche, and his nephew Doug, and we camp there for the evening. A fire is burning for us, and several big piles of firewood nearby, and later Rickie Poche arrives to hand deliver some andouille that he made yesterday. What a refreshing greeting for weary paddlers!

Hurray for river angel Charlie Poche and his family!

Paddling under abandoned grain elevator dock near Paulina

The conditions are changing rapidly as we get closer to New Orleans. The flat water and headwinds are dictating our progress making the expedition tedious and challenging, but without these natural events, we wouldn't exist.

-Mark River



What adventures await us downstream? Looking around the bend towards Grammercy-Wallace Bridge, anchored Freighter and one of the Queens steaming upstream

For photos and more reading, go to www.rivergator.org

The Lower Mississippi River Dispatch

Is a service of the Lower Mississippi River Foundation