

# North American River Runners

NARR (North American River Runners) established in 1975 is known for being the best whitewater rafting outfitter on the New and Gauley rivers in West Virginia. They are well on their way to adding Smallmouth bass fishing to their list of top notch activities. This organization holds true to it's 30 plus years of experience which shinned from start to finish.



NARR's recently added overnight fishing package is a program that entices fishing enthusiasts of all ages to try their luck on a quest for Smallmouths. The most challenging and feistiest sport fish where monster size catches are often heard about but seldom experienced. The upper New river is from a fishing perspective, fast moving water with large rocks everywhere you look. The surroundings were gorgeous with waterfall cliffs along the banks; fog moving through the Appalachian Mountains, and every few seconds creating an entirely new picture. During our two day fishing excursion, I only saw one small john boat. I don't think a boat could travel far with a prop down for all of the rocks. The water visibility was 2 ½ feet with a temperature of 62-63 degrees. This time of year (Mid-April) is considered pre-spawn for Smallmouths and a perfect time to fish for the "Big Fish".



Our trip was guided by Cory Boothe, who is truly an expert proven capable to deliver results. Cory contacted me several times before the trip to see just exactly what I needed. He asked questions like what type of gear do you use? What type of line? What type of bait? And so on. I told him I primarily use a spinning reel with live bait and he said he had a surprise for me. I couldn't wait to see what that was.

This was a totally new fishing experience for both me and my dad, Harry Oaks. Dad is a seventy year old veteran angler who has fished from Canada to Florida. I remember watching dad climb out of the boat onto a tree limb and dip Crappies out one right after another. He caught 15 Crappies using the same minnow, lobbing them one by one into the boat for us to pack in the cooler. We saw Crappies jump six inches out of the water to hit that minnow. It's true! Dad was laughing all the while. This wasn't one of those old fashioned Crappie trips and we didn't get to take home a cooler full of fish, but the excitement and the memories of this trip will last for years to come.

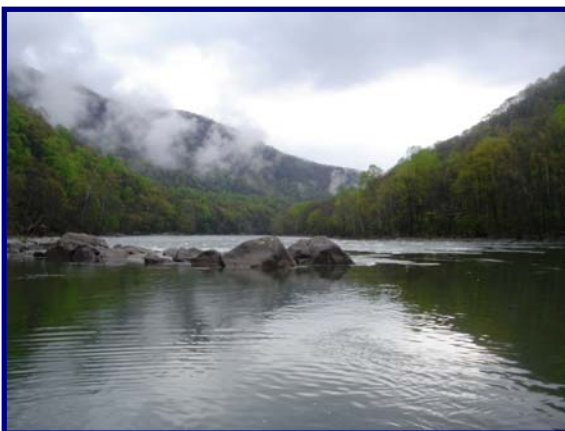
En route to our departure spot we came across a fallen tree that blocked the road. Another NARR super hero (Ben) kicked our monster truck into 4-wheel drive. We straddled a ditch to get through, while pulling a trailer behind with two huge 18- and 14- foot double stacked rafts. What was Cory's surprise for us? Soon after we made it to the ramp, I found out that live lizards were Cory's surprise. This was another big first for both Dad and I; we've fished with frogs in Canada but never Lizards. This trip was to be full of surprises! We pushed off at Grandview sandbar. Dad caught the first fish. Unfortunately, it didn't count because it got off the line before he could get it in the raft.

Then it was my turn! It had only been twenty minutes since we started and I landed my first fish, a 19 inch male close to 4 lbs, caught with Cory's live Lizard. There was some high fives and a boogie dance in the raft. I couldn't contain the excitement. The fish hit so hard and swam back and forth underneath the raft, talk about some heart racing. What a rush! What a cool way to start off the trip! We took a few quick pictures and I put it back in the water. NARR does practice a catch and release program.



We traveled 4-5 miles down river fishing hard all along the way. It's just this type of river fishing, constantly casting and always moving with both of us so anxious to catch another big fish. It was impossible to not be excited after seeing that first fish. We caught several Rock Bass, two of which were monster size. We fished all of the Eddies trying everything you can think of bait wise; spinners, crank baits, downsizing to smaller tubes. We caught several more Smallmouths but nothing as big as "Big Daddy".

Another of NARR's finest, Chicken-head (Tommy Canaday), also accompanied our trip. Chicken-head's expertise made our experience most pleasant. We had a few hours of sunshine when we first started fishing; then the rains came. The wind picked up and we were pounded with a hail storm, after which another cold steady rain set in. Despite the weather, Tom built us a masterpiece campsite on Dowdy Beach that included a huge fire and a five-star meal! Breakfast the next morning was also fit for royalty, and then we were soon on our way to more fishing.



I turned out to be the lucky angler with another 18 inch male. I caught this one using a 4 inch tube dipped in worm dip. Lizards and tubes were what we caught the most fish with. (20-25 total) For artificial bait, the tubes best resemble an early Softcrawl which is hard to beat. Overall the scenery was breathtaking, the customer service impeccable, and a phenomenal overnight fishing package that produced nothing less than an action packed and incredible Smallmouth Bass adventure.

S. Oaks

Delana