

# WOLF RIVER (W5)

**Put-in** Markton, County M Bridge  
**Take-out** Big Smokey Falls Landing  
**Distance** 12.7 miles  
**Approximate Time** 5-6 hours (kayak/canoe)  
**Most Difficult Rapids** Class 4

**Elevation Drop** 179 feet  
**Average Gradient** 14.1 feet per mile  
**Minimum Suggested Flow** 7.6 ft, USGS Gage @ Langlade  
**Water Level Info / Phone** Contact Local Outfitter

## Paddler's Notes

### Suggested River Levels for Paddling

The river gauge referenced below is located 9.5 miles upstream from this segment and should provide an accurate indication of current conditions in this reach. At higher levels, strainers and deadfall become more of a hazard when present.

Scout the rapids and know your limitations!



<b>Below 250 cfs</b>	Paddling not recommended.
<b>250 cfs to 400 cfs</b>	Low runnable flow for an enjoyable run. Nothing 'epic' but still worth the price of admission! Class III run. Big Smokey Falls (class IV) are a slide and boofing drop. Shotgun Eddy Rapids and Pismire Falls will be bony in this range.
<b>400 cfs to 700 cfs</b>	Very good range to paddle this segment. Upper range for intermediates. Shotgun Eddy Rapids may still be bony at low end of this range.
<b>700 cfs to 1000 cfs</b>	A fun, challenging and scenic run for advanced-level paddlers. Pushy waves and sticky holes developing at high end of this range. Several rapids and falls that normally rate class III are approaching class IV.
<b>1000 cfs to 1500 cfs</b>	High runnable flow. Unusually high flows. Previous 'big-water' experience is recommended for this range. Water is 'heavy' and pushy with powerful hydraulics in the falls and rapids which can be scary and overpowering. A class IV run.
<b>Above 1500 cfs</b>	Rare, unusually high flows. A class IV+ powerhouse run for those sponsored by Red Bull.

Locals commonly refer to the stretch between Markton and Big Smokey Falls as "Section 4".

There is an access fee to paddle the Wolf River through Menominee Tribal Lands. You must obtain a pass from the Menominee Indian Tribe at either **Big Smokey Falls Rafting (715.799.3359)** or at **Shotgun Eddy Campground and Rafting (715.882.4461)**. Call before you embark on your trip. If you're purchasing a rafting trip, the pass is included in the fees.

**24.8 Mile Markton, County M Bridge, DNR Landing** **River:** The river flows around a series of islands and a left bend before the approach to Gilmores' Mistake Rapids. Homes and cottages dot the left bank. **Shuttle:** On Highway 55, turn west onto County M, the parking area entrance is west of the bridge. The landing features a large parking area with plenty of room for trailer turnaround. Two wood chip paths lead down to the river, one at the north end of the parking area and the other at the south. The south is the easiest to use. Hand carry access, parking, trailer turnaround.

**24.2 Mile Gilmore's Mistake Rapids (Class 3)** A narrow chute and hole characterize this short whitewater run which is located in front of the Wild Wolf Inn, about 0.6 miles south of the County Highway M Bridge. This is a popular surf spot to 'park-n-play' when river levels aren't too high. The hole is shallow in low river levels, so 'verticals' are generally not recommended. You can scout by landing on the rocky shelf on river left in front of the Inn. The Inn features a popular restaurant and is the base for Herb's Rafting.

## WOLF RIVER (W5)

- 24.1 Mile Wild Wolf Inn Landing** *River:* The landing is on river-left. Downstream, the river runs through scattered boulders until Burnt Shanty Rapids. *Shuttle:* On Highway 55, south of the County M intersection, the landing entrance is at the south end of the Wild Wolf Inn parking lot. The landing is open for public use and offers a large parking area and plenty of room for trailer turnaround. **Park at the top parking area and do not drive your vehicle down to the landing area!** You'll have to hike your boat and gear down to the river from your vehicle. If you use the landing or facilities please go in and buy some food, snacks or sodas from the restaurant/bar. Buettner's Wild Wolf Inn owns and maintains the landing and all of the facilities.
- 23.3 Mile Burnt Shanty Rapids (Class 2)** The river narrows after a right bend into a 200-yard long rapid. The rapids end with a group of densely-packed boulders on river-left and a fun, wavy drop on river-right.
- 22.0 Mile Shotgun Eddy Rapids (Class 2)** Shotgun Eddy is 950 yards of rapids and boulder gardens. This stretch is great fun when river levels are adequate, but shallow, scrappy and sometimes frustrating in lower flows.
- 20.6 Mile Pismire Falls (Wolf Rapids) (Class 2-3)** The river constricts and bends left at the end of a wide pool and rumbles into a difficult rapids and falls under the County WW bridge. The rapids are nearly 100 yards long and end with Pismire Falls, a wavy drop over a river wide ledge. The current rips through the rapids and falls due to the constricting river and a steep gradient. Several holes develop in the rapids and falls when water levels are medium or higher. Expect big waves and sticky holes in high water conditions, especially at the bottom of the falls. Don't underestimate! The next 3.6 miles are mostly flat-water.
- 18.0 Mile Otter Slide Landing** *River:* The landing is on the left bank in a right bend. *Shuttle:* On Highway 55, The landing is approximately 0.3 miles south of the County Road B intersection.
- 16.4 Mile (Island, Left Fork) Sullivan Falls (Class 3)** Lazy Creek, followed by the Evergreen River enter from river right as you approach a large wooded island. The right fork leads to Evergreen Rapids (*see below*). Most paddlers follow the main channel down the left fork where a short class 2 rapid leads into Sullivan Falls about 150 yards below the fork. The Falls feature an exciting six-foot drop over a river-wide ledge. Use the short trail on the left bank to scout or portage. The falls spill into a scenic, riffley pool. There is a concession stand here (*beverages and snacks*), please be courteous and buy something if it's open!
- 16.4 Mile (Island, Right Fork) Evergreen Rapids (Class 2)** Evergreen Rapids are located in the right fork. The rapids are not as challenging as Sullivan Falls and are best run in medium and higher water levels. Be sure to scout the narrow, rocky channel for potential deadfall and strainers.
- 16.0 Mile Duck's Nest Falls (Class 3)** Duck's Nest Falls are 400 yards downstream from Sullivan Falls, you will hear the roar before you see them. Land well above the falls on the left bank to scout or portage. The falls come in two pitches; Upper Duck's Nest and Lower Duck's Nest. At **Upper Duck's Nest**, the river splits into two channels and plunges over a nice drop. A potentially dangerous hole is on river-right. The left channel is considered the easiest route. Large waves develop below the drop where the two channels come together. A short, boulder garden follows...
- The river then narrows considerably and rushes into **Lower Duck's Nest**, a wavy rapid in a right bend. A fun surf wave named "Dave's Wave" lies at the bottom. The outflow from Dave's Wave ends in a shallow boulder garden. Plan your route in stages when running the falls. ...This is a very scenic area.
- 15.4 Mile Lunch Rock (Class 3)** The river constricts in a sharp left bend, 25 yards below a small wooded island, and plunges over a short drop forming several fun holes and waves (*medium and higher flows*). A large, gently sloping, rock ledge is on river-left, a perfect spot to get out, stretch your legs and have lunch.

## WOLF RIVER (W5)

**14.4 Mile Tea Kettle / Upper Dells Rapids (Class 3)** After a long right bend, the river constricts and runs through a short narrow gorge. The gorge has two notable drops and a few side-curlers. Advanced playboaters will enjoy the challenge of the waves off the diagonal ledge at the bottom (*medium or higher flows*). Land on or near the rock ledge on river-left above the rapids to scout or portage. There is a picnic area and a couple of buildings overlooking the rapids. There is also a trail from the picnic area that leads down to the cliffs overlooking the Dalles Gorge.

**14.2 Mile The Ledge / Rapids (Class 2)** A class 2 rapids is located downstream of Tea Kettle Rapids in both channels around a small island. The Ledge is in the left channel and offers fun surf waves. Land on the left bank after these rapids to scout the Dalles Gorge, which is just downstream.

**14.0 Mile The Dalles Gorge / Lower Dells Rapids (Class 3-4)** This is the most scenic feature of the entire Wolf River. A challenging falls with several drops leads into the Dalles Gorge, where the river narrows and rumbles between sheer rock cliffs for more than 100 yards before spilling into a wide pool. You can close your eyes and almost imagine you're in Hells' Canyon on the Snake River.... well maybe not, but this is about as scenic as it gets in Wisconsin (*next to the Montreal River Canyon*).

Land on the left bank before entering the gorge (*above the initial drops*) and scout the falls and rapids from atop the cliffs. Watch your footing! And be sure to snap a few pics.

**13.8 Mile Saturday Islands** Several large islands immediately follow the Lower Dells Rapids. A few sets of riffles and boulders are located in the main channel past the first group of islands.

**12.1 Mile Big Smokey Falls (Class 4)** After a left bend, the river runs straight for about 400 yards before splitting around a pine-covered island. Big Smokey Falls are in the right channel and feature a steep, narrow, high-speed rocky slide that ends with a six-foot drop. The finale is a 'boofing-drop' in lower flows, and a big, frothy 'rooster tail' in high flows.

Scout the falls from the right bank, you'll get much better views of the slide and drop than from the island. The lower landing is on river-left, in the wide pool below the falls. Only advanced-level paddlers should attempt Big Smokey Falls! You can avoid the falls by paddling down the left fork around the island to the upper landing on river-left.

It is recommended that you wear gloves, elbow pads and chin protection. Deboating early on the slide may give you a few scrapes and bruises, especially in lower flows.

Running The Lower Dells Rapids and Big Smokey Falls is one of the most memorable whitewater experiences in Wisconsin!

**12.1 Mile Big Smokey Falls Landing River:** There are two landings at Big Smokey Falls. The first/upper landing is in the left fork around the island (*where Big Smokey Falls occur in the right fork*), just above a footbridge and a rocky slide. Using the upper landing allows you to avoid running the falls. There should be a large sign indicating the landing. No one is allowed to run the rapids/slide below the footbridge (*left fork*)! The second/lower landing is in the wide pool, also on river-left, below the falls and the island. **Shuttle:** On Highway 55, north of Keshena, follow the large road signs to the falls. Hand carry access, trailer access (below the falls), parking, trailer turnaround, concessions (*occasionally*).

# WOLF RIVER (W5)

## Driving Directions (Google Maps)



**County M, DNR Landing**



**Wild Wolf Inn Landing**



**Otter Slide Landing**



**Big Smokey Falls Landing**

## GPS - NAD83 / WGS84

County M, DNR Landing	45.12518,-88.66322
Gilmore's Mistake Rapids	45.11818,-88.66310
Wild Wolf Inn Landing	45.11729,-88.66236
Burnt Shanty Rapids	45.11421,-88.64878
Shotgun Eddy Rapids	45.10045,-88.63808
Pismire Falls	45.08565,-88.63025
Otter Slide Landing	45.06035,-88.62792
Sullivan Falls	45.05248,-88.65648
Upper Duck's Nest Falls	45.04746,-88.65934
Lunch Rock Rapids	45.04099,-88.66316
Tea Kettle / Upper Dells	45.02866,-88.66403
The Dalles / Lower Dells	45.02510,-88.66630
Saturday Islands	45.02424,-88.66306
Big Smokey Falls	45.01644,-88.63758