

MISSOURI

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The Bourbeuse River, 5 hrs from home.

The Bourbeuse (bur'-bus) River is located in East Central Missouri & flows through five counties. It is a low land river with gravel & sand bottom. This river is one of two tributaries to the Meramec River; the other is the Big River. It is not uncommon to catch bass from the river in the 3 – 4 pound class.

It starts in Phelps County & flows 147 miles to the mouth at Moselle where it drains into the **Meramec River**. There are only 53 miles between the source & the mouth if flown in an aircraft. The river has a large watershed area of over 800 square miles & **can be quite muddy** during moderate to heavy rains. During periods of rain this river becomes very muddy from low-lying watershed areas & visibility is near zero. Just hours after a hard rain, the river will begin to rise quickly as the muddy runoff pours in. A few days of dry weather will allow it to recede & clear. Bourbeuse means “**muddy**” in French. During the dry seasons it generally has water that is green in color with visibility of 3’.

MDC **public accesses to the Bourbeuse River** along the way are few & a few have concrete boat ramps. Few canoe rental businesses that service this River means light traffic & better fishing conditions. One canoe rental business services this area, **Don's Bait & Canoe Rental in St. Clair**.

Popping bugs & hair frogs for early & late & in the shadows. Black or brown woolly buggers, crawfish & matuka streamers & muddlers in size 2 or 4 are a good daytime choice. Fish patiently in deeper pools.

Mayer's Landing near **Union** is the easiest access to fish this river. It is located off **Hwy UU** a few miles Northwest of Union. It's the launch site for an 11 miles float & has a concrete boat ramp at the put-in & the take-out sites. The take-out site is in Union about 100 yards up-stream from the **Hwy 50 Bridge**. This access is also owned by the MDC & has a concrete boat ramp.

Mill Rock Access going from Sullivan, take **Hwy 185** north, then **Route H** north 10 miles, and **Mill Rock Road** east 3 miles to the access area.

It is easiest to take your own watercraft on these excursions but **requires two vehicles**, for a ride back to the put-in location. A canoe is sufficient for this outing but a small flat-bottom boat is more stable. The river flows slowly as it meanders along its path. Take an electric motor for the long slow-water pools. A boat equipped with a jet-drive outboard can be used in this river but it should be a small craft as there are still places it may have to be moved by pushing. Floating is still the best way to approach this water. I have personally fished this River from the **Hwy 19 Bridge** north of **Cuba** all the way to the mouth at **Moselle**. The best fishing I have found is about two miles downstream from the **Hwy 19 Bridge**. Access can be challenging as a canoe must be dragged up & down steep embankments to launch.

For more information on public access to the Bourbeuse River & all of the streams in Missouri consult a paperback publication from the MDC called “A Paddler's Guide To Missouri”. It is available for \$6.00 online at <http://MDC.MO.Gov>.

Although the Gasconade has the reputation for being crooked, the meandering of the Bourbeuse is more extreme. It winds for nearly 100 miles with an airline distance of only 27 miles, all of it within Franklin County! This is a relatively small, slow river which is not as clear as many of the streams farther south. Yet it provides some rather good bass fishing, has many picturesque features & is surprisingly little cut up by roads crossing it. It is seldom floatable in summer above Bartel Bend (Hwy H) & becomes rather "civilized" beyond the first Union Bridge. Difficulty: I. Gradients: general - 2.4, Hwy 19 to Bartel Bend - 3.9, to Hwy 185 - 1.7, to Happy Sock Creek - 2.3, to Meramec River - 2.1.

Accesses Gasconade, Franklin counties.

0.0 Hwy 19 Bridge. There is another bridge 1.1 miles upstream, reached from Hwy 19. Both are possible put-ins. 3.0 Low-water bridge. Hwy 19 is 2.8 miles west.

5.4 Dry Fork enters on left.

9.9 Or 0 **MDC Tea Access** on north side of river. Hwy T runs north from Tea to Rosebud on Hwy 50.

23.4 Hwy H Bridge. Poor access.

27.1 or 17.2 **MDC Mill Rock Access** on Mill Road off of SR H. (good 7.2 mile float to
34.3 or 24.4 MDC Wenkel Ford on Wenkel Ford Rd off SR 185). Getting there: North of I-44 on SR H (exit 225) for 2 miles, right on SR 185 for 6 miles thru Spring Cluff, left on Wenkel Ford Rd, go 3 miles for canoe take-out. Proceed across the sometimes deep ford on Wenkel Ford Rd for about 3 miles, come to the T with Mill Road, go left on Mill Road to Mill Rock access point.

31.3 Champion City (Hwy CC) Bridge. No access.

41.8 Roaring Spring on right.

45.3 **Peters Ford**, reached by CR from **Hwy 185 at Noser Mill (good wading)**, which is 2 miles northeast. Access. CR right of way only.

51.3 Greenstreet (cabins) atop bluff on left.

52.4 **old Noser Mill Hwy 185 Bridge**. Summer community here is called "Eastwood". Low mill dam. Private - no access.

73.9 or 64.0 **MDC Reiker Ford Access (good wading)**. Roads to both sides of river. Cabins on right.

84.9 **MDC Mayers Landing Access (good wading)**. Hwy UU parallels river on left.

87.9 Bridge. City of Union one mile northeast. No access.

89.9 Happy Sock Creek on right.

93.3 or 83.4 **MDC Union Access. Hwy 50 Bridge** at Union. No camping. Ramp.

95.8 Chicago Rock Island R.R. Bridge.

96.8 Guths Mill Dam. Portage.

100.3 R.R. recrosses river

102.3 U.S. Hwys 50 & 66 & I-44 bridges.

107.6 or 97.7 **MDC Chouteau Claim Access**. Junction with Meramec River.

