

Valley Angler Last Trip North? By Bill Thompson

Last Sunday may have been my last trip, at least for this year, up to the Androscoggin. Accompanied by my good friend John Buckley we explored some new water and revisited a few old places.

The day began at the shop to pick up a few flies and some extra tippet material. With a freshly filled travel mug we headed up Route 16 with the grim knowledge that the fishing season was coming to an end and this may well be the last trip for the year.

Our first stop of the day was at McDonald's in Gorham. We had not stopped for coffee or a quick breakfast sandwich. As almost any angler will tell you the Androscoggin River runs right behind the restaurant and makes a convenient place to access the river. Depending on the flow it is possible to wade across a short piece of river to a close by island and then out to the main portion of the stream. Once on the main channel you are in an entirely different world. Only a short distance away is the main street of Gorham and busy Route 16, but out on the river you leave the real world behind.

Out here you are on river time. Time is not told by the advance of the second hand; on the river time is kept by rhythm of the fly rod moving through the casting arch.

The river in this section is really quite beautiful. This morning was no exception and with the day beginning to warm up the river was covered with a rising mist. The surrounding hills were a blaze with autumn color. On one rocky outcrop above the river someone had placed an American flag.

The fishing was on the slow side, but I managed to catch a couple nice rainbows and lose a couple of more. Somewhere along the line John had got ahead of me and he was no where to be seen. I headed back up river and waded back across to the parking lot where John was waiting.

Our next stop was for lunch and of course that means a stop at Ursula's. She had just opened up for the day and we greeted her with our best German, "Gutten Tag". John had a brat with red cabbage and I had the wiener with a great German potato salad. All through lunch I kept telling John that he had to try a piece of Ursula's homemade pie. John kept saying that he could smell pie and sure enough on a table close by was fresh made apple pie set out to cool. Talk about good marketing. Needless to say we both had pie. John had the apple and I had the coconut cream.

Next stop was Pontook Dam. Amazingly enough aside from two other anglers down river we had the place to ourselves. With in a very short time I had caught two very nice browns. It looked like it was going to be hot and heavy for a while, but it soon cooled off. John picked up a

few rainbows closer to the raceway and I managed to foul hook a small one. We decided to head back down river.

Our last stop of the day was North Road back in Gorham. John waded down stream from me and it didn't take long for him to hook up. Back up stream my luck had run out for the day and I went without a hit. At this point it made little difference as I had already had a terrific day. John got a couple more and we called it a day.

As always it is the journey that matters and this day was no exception. With a busy schedule coming up and the season rapidly coming to an end it is doubtful I will make it back up to the Andro this year. A late fall or winter trip may be in the cards, as the lower section of the river is open all year, but it won't be quite the same and it is doubtful that Ursula's will be open.

See you on the river.