

Big Piney River

The Big Piney is the largest tributary of the Gasconade River and is rated as one of the best fishing streams, especially in its upper and middle reaches where you can view limestone bluffs topped with pines and where there is a good chance to see wild turkey. Numerous good-sized and beautiful springs feed the river so that it is floatable throughout the summer, except in especially dry years.

The lower river, below Interstate 44, is less attractive due to some of the blights of civilization, but these last three miles can be tolerated for a continued trip on the Gasconade.

Difficulty: I, seldom II except in high water.

Gradients: general — 4.3; Baptist Camp to Boiling Spring — 4.2; to Hwy. 32 — 3.6; to Prewett Spring Ford — 4.7; to Ross Access — 4.4; to Gasconade River — 3.8.

Counties: Texas, Pulaski, Phelps.

- 0.0 [Baptist Camp Access](#). No ramp. Must carry boats short distance.
- 3.5 Tone Hogan Ford on county road. Access.
- 8.7 [Dogs Bluff Access](#) on left, on Hwy. 17. ➡
- 12.4 Brushy Creek on right.
- 13.2 Blankenship Cave in end of bluff on right is merely a rock shelter. This is the Horseshoe Bend area.
- 14.6 [Mineral Springs Access](#) on right, off Hwy. 63 at the north Houston city limit, west on Oak Hill Drive, west on Forest Drive and north on Mineral Drive. Mineral Spring 0.5 mile up branch. ➡
- 14.8 Mineral Springs Ford. Access in dry weather.
- 15.3 Cathcart Hollow on right.
- 16.9 Burton Branch on left.
- 18.7 Bell Bluff on left.
- 19.3 Sandy Shoals Ford. Sand Shoals Road connects Route E on the east to Route AA on the west.
- 21.5 Arthur Creek on right.
- 24.8 Steam Mill Hollow Creek on left.
- 25.8 [Boiling Spring Access](#) on right. ➡ Spring is at river level on left and has a flow of about 10 million gallons a day. Private campground. A good road crosses the river here on a concrete low-water "bridge." This is a local swimming hole. River quite slow from here to Hwy. 32.
- 27.7 Narrow Gap Bluff on left.
- 29.0 Burnett Spring on left.
- 29.8 Boone Creek on right.
- 31.8 [Mason Bridge Access](#) on right on Mason Bridge Road. Gravel ramp.
- 34.9 Falling Springs up right bank.
- 36.1 Hazelton Spring, off river to left, is not open to public. Site of old grist mill. Private access on right.
- 38.8 Paddy Creek on left. U.S. Forest Service campground one mile up creek.
- 39.8 Slabtown Access (Forest Service).
- 40.8 Slabtown Spring branch enters on right but is posted.
- 44.7 Blooming Rose Camp. Mark Twain National Forest.
- 46.3 Prewett Spring Ford on left. Prewett Spring is on private land and is not open to the public.
- 48.4 Old 4 J's Horse Camp Access on left. Gravel access at end of Forest Road 1794.
- 50.0 Six Crossings.
- 52.2 Pine Bluff on right is more than 200 feet tall.
- 52.7 A pipe crosses the river bottom at right angles to the current sometimes causing a roller wave, but paddle boats go over it easily. Just downstream, on left is the mouth of Bald Ridge Hollow and a road.
- 54.7 [Ross Access](#) on right, just below Ross bridge. This is last practical take-out before entering Fort Leonard Wood. Gravel bar. No ramp.
- 57.7 Miller Spring Branch on left. The spring, 0.3 mile up the branch, is an ebbing-and-flowing spring, of which there are few in Missouri. The rate of flow may fluctuate from 5 million gallons to two or three times that much during a single day.
- 59.9 Enter military reservation. Both sides of the river are within Fort Wood from here to mile 60.2.
- 61.8 Low rock "dam" at water plant intake. Do not run in boat! Portage.
- 61.9 Concrete bridge to golf course on right, and other post recreation areas.
- 64.7 Stone Mill Spring and Officer's Picnic Area on right (Forest Service). The spring's flow is around 10 million gallons a day.
- 66.2 Concrete dam backs up water for about a mile. Channel cuts around dam to left. Dangerous obstructions! Portage. Use caution.
- 66.5 Bridge. Good access with limited parking on right bank. East Gate Fort Wood Campground on left bank.
- 66.8 East Gate Access (Forest Service) on right bank. Good canoe/kayak access.
- 68.9 Leave reservation. Land on left is still within reservation.
- 69.3 Spring Creek enters on right.
- 69.4 Crossroads Access (Forest Service). Parking and walk-in access for canoes and kayaks.
- 69.6 Route J parallels river on right along Spring Creek Bluff.
- 77.5 Bookers Bend Access (Forest Service) on right. Forest Road 1730.
- 80.0 Shanghai Spring (Blue Spring), 500 feet up branch at left, is comparable in size to the other large springs along the Piney. The spring is on private grounds but may be viewed from the road.
- 81.4 Army railroad bridge.
- 82.4 Teardrop Road bridge. Devil's Elbow. No access. An original Route 66 bridge.
- 82.9 Hwy. Z Bridge (old Hwy. 66 bridges). Private access on left bank below bridge.
- 83.2 I-44 bridges. No access.
- 85.7 Junction with Gasconade River. Private property. No access.

