

## Morning on the Manistee

Today I will visit the river known as the Manistee. This river was named by the Indians that were native to the area. The English translation of the Indian word "Manistee" is not clear, but a great many people believe that the symbolic name loosely translated means "the Spirit of the Wild." I believe that is a most appropriate name for what I am about to describe.

I reach the area of the river I wish to view and park my vehicle. I take care not to slam the door so I do not disturb the peaceful quiet of the May morning. Before I take my first step, I look about me and tune in my senses to the sights, sounds and smells of magnificent river. The silence of the forest is subtle-yet in a way overwhelming. I think subconsciously I am attuned to listening for noise. When it is not present-the quiet stillness is a welcomed comfort.

I walk a few paces to find a trail that descends down a gentle slope to the river. Today this single path has been traveled by two Whitetail deer evidenced by two sets of tracks. The trail is surrounded by vegetation including wild grasses and flowers that glisten with drops of dew in the early morning sunlight. The flowers and grass eventually give way to Hemlock pines, jack pines and cedar trees and finally reeds and plants that border the water's edge.

Now I am at the water's edge and I survey the sight before me. I watch the water's flow-notice the colors of the river-dark green and blue highlighted by the sun's dancing rays. Upon the nearly still or slowly moving pools the sun has created shadow paintings of the tall pines and cedars on their surfaces. Just then another movement catches my eye-it is the pure crystal white flowing motion of the water rushing about protruding rocks that dot the Manistee's surface all along it's westward course. Droplets of water splash into the air about the rock and create a shower of tiny diamonds as they dance briefly in the sun before they again drop back into the ever flowing stream.



As it flows, if one listens carefully-the river seems to murmur a lullaby. To me it is melody of calm contentment-yet it bears a strong purpose. That purpose is these waters will be carried to their journey's end where they will merge with the waters of Lake Michigan and the Manistee will flow no further.

Miles Milkovich