I n 1906, THE U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plugged the Green River at Brownsville with the construction of Lock and Dam 6. The deep pool it created allowed the steamer *Evansville* to board passengers in Indiana for a trip up the Green River to Mammoth Cave.

Debunking tourists streamed up the landing near the River Styx for a hike through the woods to the historic entrance of Mammoth Cave. The trip cost $8 to $10 for a four-day excursion. The price included transportation for the majority of Kentuckians. Now, canoeists and kayakers may enjoy two floats of roughly 17 miles along a river in the process of being reborn.

The pool dropped more than 7 feet, exposing gravel bars and pushing springs that had remained hidden since the horse and buggy provided transportation for the majority of Kentuckians. Now, canoeists and kayakers may enjoy two floats of roughly 17 miles along a river in the process of being reborn.

The first 20 years or so, river traffic proved robust, culminating in 22,000 passengers in Indiana for a trip up the Green River to Mammoth Cave.

By November 2016, the 110-year-old dam could take no more. The Green River, by this time, had carved a path underneath the aging structure, creating a dangerous whirlpool from the breach. Federal officials authorized the lock and dam’s removal.

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Fishing should improve as new vegetation grows along the river.
Beyond.

The Green flows around Boardcut Island, bends left and passes Stice Island. Lower water levels now reveal rocky shoals that hold smallmouth bass, especially around Stice Island.

After Stice Island, the Green straightens for a distance before bending left and into Crump Island. The deep sections in this stretch hold flooded timber and deadfalls, perfect places to work an inline spinner for muskellunge. This section has a few shoals after Crump Island; then the current downstream of Houchins Ferry, or small crankbaits for panfish. Black bass, in-line spinners for muskellunge, or small crankbaits for panfish.

The put-in is at Houchins Ferry and the take-out is at the Brownsville City Park ramp, via Washington Street/Old Ferry Road in Brownsville.

The first thing you’ll notice is the steep, muddy ascent to launch your boat. It smacks the senses seeing the river’s normal level after decades of higher water.

Consult the U.S. Geological Survey website for information on the river flow data and releases from the dam at Green River Lake. Ideal release data from the dam are 200 to 350 cfs. Muskie fishing requires prehistoric pumping with river flows at Munfordville measuring 450 to 800 cfs.

This river flow rate is a bit fast for fishing slow lures such as a jig, but good for anglers fishing crankbaits or top water lures for black bass, in-line spinners for muskellunge or small crankbaits for panfish.

Dam releases below 150 cfs produce little current downstream of Houchins Ferry, making this a flat straight flatwater paddle. Long stretches of bank are slick and flat with sandy, loamy soil. Great amounts of silt lay behind large boulders and fill in undercut banks.

Just after launching at Houchins Ferry, paddlers will notice long stretches of rocky banks on the outside bends. These areas held largemouth and spotted bass ready to take a 3-inch, boot-tailed soft plastic grub. Green pumpkin and black are the best colors to use here.

The river currently has so many fallen trees in the water that it’s difficult to know where to start. It’s hard to beat woody cover nearest rocky banks as good bets for sunfish and largemouth bass.

The best section of the float starts at the mouth of Nolin River. The confluence lies about 2 miles downstream of Houchins Ferry at the end of a long, gentle bend. Exposed rock and small bluffs greet paddlers on river right all the way through a bend to the left. Large bluegill inhabit branches washed into cuts along the rocky shoreline. They will savage 1-inch, red curly-tailed grubs rigged on $1/8-ounce leadhead lugs.

Soon, the roar of the river flowing over the remnants of Lock and Dam 6 overtakes the ears of paddlers. The bark of this small rapid far exceeds its bite; run it straight down the middle. The flowing water below this structure is an excellent spot to catch smallmouth bass.

After this riffle, the current slows to a crawl for the last mile of this float. This backwater is the effect of Lock and Dam 5, roughly 1 1/2 miles downstream. The take-out for this float lies on river left shortly downstream of the KY 70/259 Bridge in Brownsville.

Kentuckians interested in seeing a reborn river in one of most beautiful and mysterious regions in the world should make plans to paddle Green River through Mammoth Cave National Park. It is a rare treat to see history in the making.