



**Note:** This report comes in two parts. The first portion is reporting on our week this summer at Anne Marie Lodge on the Minipi River system. The second part discusses trips to Anne Marie and also two of the other lodges on the watershed.

Joining my son, Scott, and I at Anne Marie Lodge were Jeff Reinke, Don Nelson, Josh Luftglidden, Paul Wilms, and Neal McNamama.



The short report of our week pursuing giant brookies at Anne Marie Lodge on the Minipi River in Labrador: It was a week that served up all that Labrador has to offer – from the mean and nasty to the truly spectacular. The first two days were the coldest we’ve ever seen up there and, with the wind, truly nasty. And the fishing was difficult – very little

happening with just a few fish over 5# taken by the group. The third afternoon saw some warming and the wind settled and we had a large brown drake hatch that provided some of those classic stalking and sight casting experiences for big brookies – everyone’s spirits brightened and the fishing results



showed. The rest of the week continued to be very positive culminating our last evening with Anne Marie at her best. The water was glassy and there was a massive brown drake spinner fall – fish were cruising and doing the classic “head to tail” rise, gulping those drakes. At times, you could see 10 – 12 fish working at once, all big fish. There were several successful stalks from paddled canoes and fish up to 7.5# taken, including Jeff’s first 7 pounder (at left). Great finale to a week of mixed results, given that four of us had fished the Minipi River in previous years. Our overall numbers of fish released was far from our best trips of the past, but the average size of the fish was incredible – our best trip ever for numbers of large fish. We ended up with 43 book fish (over 3#) with over 75% of them taken on the surface on dries with a highlight of eleven fish over 7#.

- 5 to 6# – 8
- 6 to 7# – 9
- 7 to 8# – 8
- 8 to 9# – 2
- 9+# - 1

We had some caddis “blizzard” hatches in addition to a variety of mayfly hatches. However, never previously have we seen as many large caddis –



they were big enough that a #6 Stimulator looked very similar to the huge caddis sitting on the surface.

Some other highlights – on one day, Scott and I fished mayfly hatches from 9am til the dinner break – literally 8 hours of fishing large, working fish in three different areas. Hatches varied from small grey mayflies to the big drakes which make the fish appear truly stupid. We did have a few hours with one pod of fish who were so selective we couldn't get an eat – never did figure them out. Our numbers were 12 eats, two breakoffs, 5 released for 25.5 pounds. On past trips dating back to '97, we've had several days of over 30# (3 days over 50#), but never a full 8 hours of constant dry fly activity, starting that early in the morning – very special day considering the size of the fish and the visual excitement that accompanies that experience. These particular conditions may not repeat themselves often, but it's good to know it can happen.

There were several successful stalks of 10 to 20+ minutes by guys in our group, but the classic was a 60 minute stalk, all from a paddled canoe, by Paul Wilms. Paul had of a fish which kept working up and down this one particular bank, approximately 200-300 yards long. About 20 minutes into the episode, he got the fish to eat, but just pricked him and it didn't stick. However, getting stuck didn't stop him from eating and the fish kept feeding until Paul finally got him after about an hour of intense pursuit – 7.25 pounder!

The new lodge at Anne Marie was close to being completed when we were there and will certainly be finished by the end of this season. Although the old lodge was one of those famous hallmarks in the fly fishing world, the new lodge is spectacular and will add a new dimension to fishing Anne Marie.



The outlet at Anne Marie – aerial view of the outlet downriver to Woody's

Josh with 6# brookie



New lodge at Anne Marie and the group in front of the old lodge



Paul on a successful 7# hunt in the Narrows





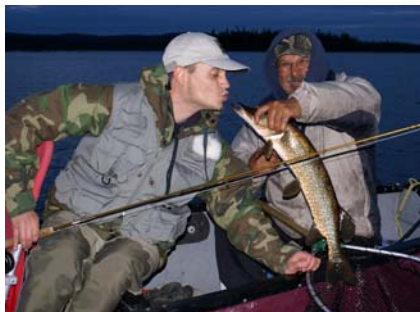
The focus of our “big fish” champ for the week, Don Nelson, was intense – Don with a 7 3/4# brookie



Scott wades the Little Narrows for a pretty 6.5# fish.....



.....that was carrying a partially rusted size 8 Grey Wulff in it's lip



Idiot Point produced brookies, pike, and land locked artic char – could need lip replacement!

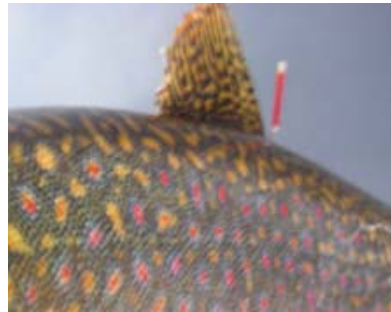


Portage to Portage Pond involves the guide dragging the canoe up small stream and a short hike

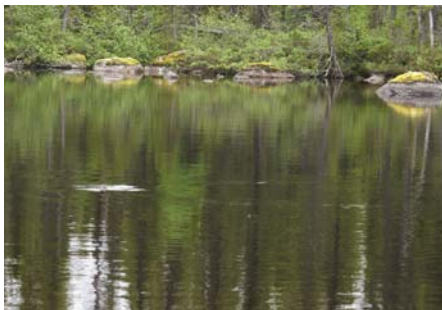




Patches produced two 8+ and one 9 pound brookie and lots of excitement



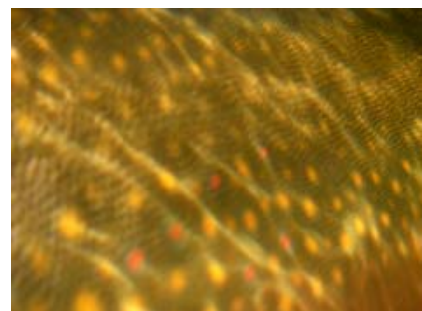
All brookies are weighed and recorded – many are tagged to track movement in the watershed



The rise and the 7# brookie that caused those rings



Skittering bombers in inlets and outlets can produce explosive takes



Stoneflies are also part of the aquatic mix – underwater flank of a colorful brookie





In this land of spruce trees, water, and caribou moss, maybe someone from above will finally, after a few years of delays, smile on the new lodge at Ann Marie.




**Fly Fishing**  
ADVENTURES

**Travel Report**  
**Minipi River, Labrador**  
**Part 2**

From the Minipi River in Labrador – last month, we featured a trip report with specifics from the week we spent at Anne Marie Lodge on the Minipi River. This report includes more reports from Anne Marie Lodge and also the other lodges on the Minipi watershed, Little Minipi Lodge and Minipi Lodge.



John Marlowe and John Cadle were at Anne Marie the week after our trip. Mr. Marlowe (at right with a nice brookie) commented, “Of course, it was wonderful. How could it miss with a chance to snag one of those beautiful big brookies on a little dry. Brookies aren’t counted unless they are over 3 pounds.....what??? The place has a great feel. Thanks for putting us onto this spot.”



Joe Brancato and his father, Joe (below left), are outdoor enthusiasts from Pennsylvania where son Joe says a “trophy wild brookie would be about 10 inches

long.” Joe gave us a comprehensive report which captures the essence of the fishery at Anne Marie. “My father and I had a great time. Beautiful scenery, the guides were a great group, and the two ladies that did the cooking took good care of us.



**The fishing and highlights:**

- casting from shore in Lover Boy channel between 10:00am and 3:00pm with big brookies rising to a hatch of small mayflies, Dad and I hooked 9 fish, lost two (a straightened hook and breakoff), and released 7 with a total weight of 31 pounds.
- Had a great time fishing for smaller fish in the rivers. One afternoon between the outlet of Anne Marie and Woody’s Pond, I caught approximately 45 brookies between 7 and 18 inches long, mostly on bombers.
- Largest brookies: Dad 7.25# and me 7.75#.
- Pike could be a nuisance when you were fishing for brookies. When I targeted them with wire leader and pike flies, they were fun.
- Lots of wind our first three evenings, but the last three were calm, drakes were hatching, and Anne Marie offered the classic stalking of fish that we came for. Dad and I caught 3 to 6 brook trout each evening including a father-son double header with each fish over 6#. The last evening, the seven guys at the lodge collectively released 23 “book fish” (a “book fish” is 3+ pounds).
- I was surprised how difficult the big fish were to catch when no hatches were occurring, but how easy they were when they were rising to dry flies.



This destination is most accurately described as a challenging “trophy fish” destination where you can take brook trout of 5 to 9 pounds on dry flies.....not normally the type of spot for newcomers on their first fly fishing adventure. However, this summer Minipi Lodge had two people who were on their first fly fishing trip, attempting to catch their first fish on a fly. Berniece Patterson chose this wilderness to cast a fly for the first time and accompanied her husband, Pat ( above left, who’s fly fishing territory spans the globe), and took her first fish on a fly (first fish, second from left). George Fareed, joined fly fishing friend Peter Boasberg at Minipi Lodge, and had this comment on his first fly rod trip: “My first wilderness fly fishing experience far exceeded my expectations – it was definitely one of the greatest trips of my life. I was a Pop Warner fly fisherman who jumped suddenly to the NFL of fly fishing.” Nice comparison George, above in the stream celebrating the wilds of Labrador. The Minipi Brook Trout certainly could qualify as part of the “NFL of fly fishing” as most of the world’s legendary fly fishers have made a pilgrimage to these waters to take their giant brookies on dry flies.



Bill Lucoff (l) and Don Olen (r) with big brookies – Bill at Anne Marie and Don from Little Minipi. Phil Drees (lc) and George Fareed (rc) with pike. Bill focused on pike exclusively one day and had a 100+ pike to 10#, using floater/diver patterns.





Peter Boasberg deplanes in Goose Bay, arriving from Halifax. Berniece Patterson, new fly rod in hand, lands at Minipi Lodge (right) via float plane from Goose Bay. You gotta really want to go to Goose Bay, Labrador!



Son Joe with his 7.75# trophy (left) and Dad Joe with a river sized brookie. The second of their father-son 6# brook trout double being netted – the first fish is already at the bottom of the net.



Joe and Dr. Tom Wall enjoying a rainy day shoreside cup of coffee, Phil Drees with an Anne Marie trophy, and Pat Patterson with one of his 6+ pound Lake Minipi brookies. Brown drake.



Water, spruce trees, and big brook trout

Photo credits - thanks for submitting photos for this report to Jeff Reinke, Josh Luftglidden, Paul Wilms, Joe Brancato, Pat Patterson, George Fareed, John Marlowe, Bill Lucoff, Phil Drees, and Don Olen.