



Tyler on the Kasishiwi River -30°F By John Huston

This blog represents the first example of what our typical expedition blog will look like.

Most blog entries will include a short text journal, an audio dispatch, a photo and daily stats (temperature, location, distance traveled, distance to the pole etc). Some entries will only include our location or our location and an audio dispatch.

Location: Outside of Ely, Minnesota

Temperature at dusk: -20°F

Distance Traveled: 2 miles

Hours traveled: 3 hours

Photo Caption: Fish of the night.

Listen to the audio dispatch: Tyler Fish

{play}images/stories/nightonethekawish.mp3|#349BFD[BGCOLOR]{{/play}}

Tyler and I are together in Ely, Minnesota for a week of expedition training and testing. Today we spent a few hours going through our equipment, making a list of the few odds and ends that we still need to procure and continued to try to put on pounds (Tyler is leading that contest, although John has made a recent push toward 190).

We capped off the day with an arduous 3 hour sled pull on snowshoes in the dark. We pulled 300 pounds each through the deep snows of the National Forest surrounding the Outward Bound base where Tyler works. We navigated a continuous obstacle course of thin ice, shelf ice (ice without water underneath, this type of ice is very weak), 3 to 4 feet drifts, slush (a sticky combination of snow and water, that is formed when water seeps through the ice and mixes with the lower layers of snow) and rocks.

The evening was crisp and cold, with very little wind. The work left us quite sweaty, despite the cold air. With little wind, -30°F and -40°F can be quite comfortable if one is working hard and generating a lot of body heat. However, the snow at these low temperatures can be very coarse and make it feel like one is pulling a sled across sand.

It feels fantastic to be away back in Ely, where I lived from 2000 until 2007. Part of me really misses the cold, cozy little town. You've got to love a town where the people truly embrace all seasons. Last night was -33°F, Tyler and I slept outside and tested our new Bergans of Norway sleeping bags. Yesterday, Babbit, MN, 20 miles south of Ely, recorded a low of -54°F! We were hoping for cold temperatures for training and testing and we got lucky.

Tomorrow, we will continue to go through our equipment, hopefully go for a quick outdoor swim in our dry suits and sleep under the stars again.

From this point forward updates will be coming more frequently. We leave the country for the Arctic in 26 days. We hope to start the expedition during the first few days of March.