ADIRONDACK WATERWAYS

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Adirondack Waterways

There are more than 3,000 lakes and ponds and 6,000 miles of rivers and streams in the Adirondacks. Paddling ranges from roiling white-water chutes to glassy ponds where deer stop to drink; from a short circuit around a scenic lake to a multi-day river and lake trip.

This is a general guide to locations for paddling opportunities. Once you decide on a location, get yourself a good topographic map and/or guidebook.

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Universal Accessible Waterways in the Adirondacks

Recreational opportunities for people with mobility impairments can be found throughout the Adirondacks. Look for universally accessible facilities such as docks, outhouses and viewing platforms at places such as Ausable Marsh (pg. 9), Lampson Falls (pg. 11), Sand Pond-Mud Pond Area on the West Branch Oswegatchie River (pg. 14), Francis Lake (pg. 14) and Moss Lake (pg. 14). These places can be enjoyed on many Adirondack lakes. John Dillon Park, just north of Long Lake, is a state-of-the-art facility (www.dillonpark.org) that does it all. Check with full-service outfitters for more options.

Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism/Lake Placid CVB
518-523-2445 or 800-447-3224
www.lakeplacid.com
info@laketrailid.com

Lewis County Tourism
800-724-0242
www.adirondackstughill.com
info@adirondackstughill.com

Tourism/Lake Placid CVB
518-523-2445 or 800-447-5224
Environmental Conservation publications or call them for specific information (see left). Much of the lands that border the routes identified in this guide are privately owned. State navigation law allows for paddlers to travel on private lands for short distances to bypass obstacles in the waterway. However, entering private lands for any other reason, including putting in and taking out, is trespassing, unless permission has been granted by the landowner. If you lack experience or gear, knowledgeable guides and outfitters will be happy to make your outing memorable.

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How to use the Descriptions & Maps

GET MORE INFORMATION

The descriptions are brief and the maps rudimentary—the information provided here is not intended to be used as a working field guide. The complex nature of the waterways found in the Adirondacks requires that you obtain a good map and guidebook before setting out. The guidebooks and maps will not only help make your outing a safer one, they will also enhance your experience by providing interesting background information on the areas you will be visiting. A list of guidebooks and maps is found on page 19. Area and regional information centers and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) are also good sources of more information (see page 3).

WHITEWATER

Whitewater trips require special skills and equipment. See International Scale of River Difficulty below. It is essential to obtain good maps and guidebooks before venturing out to do any whitewater trips. If you don’t have the necessary skills or equipment, consider taking a guided trip with outfitters who provide these services.

WATER LEVELS

Adequate water levels are essential to running most of the river and whitewater routes in this brochure. Extreme water levels will change the difficulty classification of rivers (see below). Minimum and ideal levels are suggested in guidebooks. Most river routes are best done in the Spring (April to May), Fall or after periods of heavy rain.

INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY

Class I. Moving water with a few riffles and small waves. Few or no obstructions.

Class II. Easy rapids with waves up to three feet and wide, clear channels that are obvious without scouting. Some maneuvering is required.

Class III. Rapids with high, irregular waves often capable of swamp- ing an open canoe. Narrow passages that often require complex maneuvering. May require scouting from shore.

Class IV. Long, difficult rapids with constricted passages that often require precise maneuvering in very turbulent waters. Scouting from shore is often necessary, and conditions make rescue difficult. Generally not possible for open canoes. Boaters in covered canoes and kayaks should be able to Eskimo roll.

Class V. Extremely difficult, long, and very violent rapids with highly congested routes which nearly always must be scouted from shore. Rescue conditions are difficult and there is a significant hazard to life in event of a mishap. Ability to Eskimo roll is essential for kayaks and canoes.

Class VI. Difficulties of Class V carried to the extreme of navigability. Nearly impossible and very dangerous. For teams of experts only, after close study and with all precautions taken.

Cold water temperatures below 50 degrees and extended trips in remote areas increase normal difficulty by one class level.

Personal Floatation Devices: New York State Law requires all boats and canoes must carry a U.S. Coast Guard approved wearable Personal Floatation Device (PFD) for each person in the boat. State law also requires that children must be wearing a PFD, and highly recommend that all occupants wear a PFD.
Deer River
Above High Falls is the 10-mile flatwater, Deer River Meadows. Below High Falls, the river drops rapidly with a mix of moving flatwater and rapids. Note that paddlers need to carry around the falls. Access is via dirt roads in Deer River State Forest. Beware of rapids.

"Silver Staircase"
Seven-miles of nearly continuous whitewater. Requires advanced skills to maneuver through long and complex rapids rated up to Class IV. Scouting is not always possible.

St. Regis Falls Flow/East Branch
A flatwater extends upstream for 6 miles above the dam in St. Regis Falls. Below Everton Falls, a 3-mile section of the the East Branch picks up speed with a series of rapids and falls, that may require portaging, alternating with moving flatwater channels. Medium high water levels are best.

St. Regis River & Santa Clara Flow
Launching near an oxbow, you'll enter a section of moving flatwater which can be paddled upstream for several miles. Two miles downstream from the launch is a half-mile portage which marks the beginning of the Santa Clara River—a winding, marsh-filled flatwater. Take-out is at the state boat launch near the bridge on RT 458.

Madawaska Flow & Quebec Brook
Explore the extensive marshes, bogs and waterways of the Madawaska River—classic example of a northern Boreal forest. Quebec Brook flows into and out of Madawaska Pond and provides an alternative and more challenging access route that starts from Blue Mountain Road and follows Quebec Brook upstream; several portages are required. The area is part of the Santa Clara Tract and is easily accessed via a five-mile dirt road starting from RT 458, one mile west of RT 30.

St. Regis River
Paddle up through a scenic, 12-mile winding stillwater on the St. Regis River—part of the Santa Clara Tract. Access is via a 7.5-mile carry along an old road starting from Blue Mountain Road. An optional downstream take-out near the bridge is preceded by 1.5 miles of fast water and rapids; look for carry trails on the right bank. No take-out downstream due to private property.

Everton Falls Preserve—East Branch St. Regis
Above Everton Falls, nine-miles of winding flatwater traverses a broad marsh. Paddle upstream as far as you wish or start from the upstream end via a dirt road accessed from RT 458. A portage trail leads to the river.

Deer River Flow
Enjoy mountain views and bird watching on this 2.7-mile marsh-lined waterway.

Lower Osgood River
Starting from Meacham Lake’s outlet and its sandy southern shore, paddle upstream and then downstream on the Osgood which meanders through a wide marsh and beside a forested esker. Look for the huge Eagle’s nest on your left as you enter the river.

Lake Kushaqua to Osgood Pond
The 15-mile trip from Lake Kushaqua to Osgood Pond traverses an interesting group of lakes and canals. There’s a .75-mile carry between Rainbow Lake and Jones Pond. You may need to wade sections of the channel between Jones and Osgood when water levels are low. Take time to explore the three-mile stillwater outlet of Osgood Pond. An old canal connects Osgood to Church Pond. Extend the trip by carrying to Lower St. Regis Lake where myriad lakes and routes await the adventurous paddler.
Adirondack Waterways

Ausable River, Chubb River, Saranac Lakes Chain, Saranac River, Saranac River Headwaters, St. Regis Canoe Area, St. Regis Lakes

St. Regis Canoe Area & the Saranac River headwaters

The St. Regis Canoe Area and the headwater lakes and ponds of the Saranac River are a paddler’s paradise. Many carries are short and most routes can be done as an unencumbered day trip. The classic “Seven Canoes Route” is 9 miles from Little Clear Pond to Paul Smiths, traversing 10 lakes and ponds. You may need more time and a lightweight canoe for the “Nine Canoes Route” which starts from either Hoel Pond or Long Pond (1.5 miles of carries) or Little Clear Pond (2.5 miles of carries); your ultimate goal is the cluster of ponds near remote Fish Pond. The area is bisected by a steep esker formation.

Just south of the St. Regis Canoe Area, the Saranac River headwater ponds—such as Follensby Clear, Floodwood and Fish Creek—provide the starting point for various short loop trips. Short carries connect the many small ponds and channels. Expand these loops by carrying north into Long and Hoel Pond.

St. Regis Lakes Loop

The St. Regis Lakes—Lower St. Regis Lake, Spillake Lake and Upper St. Regis Lake—are connected by wide channels; a loop tour would include a .6-mile carry from the Upper Lake to the outlet dam on the Lower Lake. Great camps can be seen along much of this route. Be sure to explore beautiful Black Pond.

Saranac River

From Union Falls Pond, the Saranac River drops rapidly. Class I-II rapids in the first 4 miles are followed by a Class V drop at Tupper Pond Falls. The carry is adjacent to private property. The next five miles include a complex series of Class II-III ledges, drops and hydraulics which demand advanced skills and ample water. It is rocky and there is a wide fluctuation in the water level due to dam releases.

Saranac Lakes Chain

From the north end of Upper Saranac to the east end of Lower Saranac is 17.5 miles of continuous waterway with only one half-mile carry. Leantos and campsites are found along the shore and on islands. A fee is charged for campsites on the Lower and Middle Saranac Lakes. This popular route continues through Oseetah Lake into the Village of Saranac Lake, where the Saranac River begins.

Chubb River

Take a wilderness cruise upstream through a winding channel into a remote mountain-ringed marsh. The nine-mile round trip has one short carry midway and you may find several beaver dams along the way.

West Branch Ausable River

Cruise through eight miles of mostly tranquil water with some Class I riffles and one carry. Spring water levels are best. Don’t miss your take out just prior to Monument Falls. An unrummable boulder-filled gorge follows which is better viewed from Rte. 86.

East Branch Ausable River

The East Branch has some great spring paddling with Class II water and a tricky Class III boulder patch. You pass quickly through a scenic valley lined with high peaks and meadows. Shoreline is mostly private lands. Put in at boat launch in Upper Jay. Downstream take out is a 150 ft. stretch of state land, 2 miles upstream (before) High School. In summer, the water is too shallow to paddle.

See page 7 and 8 for Waterways to the North.

See page 10 for Waterways to the East.

See page 12 and 13 for Waterways to the South.

See page 11 for Waterways to the West.
**Ausable River, Chateaugay Lakes, Chazy Lake, Great Chazy River, Lake Champlain North, Saranac River**

**Upper & Lower Chateaugay Lake**
A wide channel connects these two lakes creating a 10.5-mile waterway. Check out Bluff Point with its adjacent shallow reef of paddle three miles up the South Inlet to the state land boundary at bridge. Below the outlet dam, the Chateaugay River drops rapidly with several falls including the spectacular 120-ft High Falls.

**Chazy Lake**
This four-mile lake is nestled at the foot of Lyon, Johnson and Ellenburg Mountains. Access the lake from the beach and park near the lake’s dam on Route 374. The lake can get rough on windy days. A nearby 3.5-mile hiking trail leads to the open summit of 3830’ Lyon Mountain.

**Great Chazy River**
The last 20-mile section of this 46-mile river is good for paddling. A downstream float starts at Mooers and extends to King Bay. Expect some motorboat traffic from Lake Champlain.

**Lake Champlain – North**
Lake Champlain is a big lake and paddlers should note the cautions mentioned on page 10 before planning to paddle on these potentially rough waters. Avoid the wind by traveling early or late in the day.

Roads parallel to the lake and boat launch sites are numerous along Lake Champlain’s northern shore. Beautiful, state-owned Valcour Island is a popular stop-over on the lake – explore its many bays, campsites and 11.9 miles of trails. It is a one-mile crossing to the island from the Peru state boat launch site. The sheltered waters near Point Au Roche State Park may also be an interesting area to explore.

**Saranac River**
From its confluence with the North Branch at Clayburg, the Saranac becomes a big river, 100-feet wide, with up to Class II rapids. It is a rocky passage at all but the highest water levels in the early spring. At Redford there are some difficult rapids and ledges, Class II-IV, which require a carry. Take-out is at High Falls Dam. NYSECo regulates water levels below High Falls Dam. The 9 miles from Morfittsville to Cadyville is initially shallow and rocky with some Class I rapids, but it quickly becomes a deep, moving flatwater to take-out at the beach in Cadyville.

**Ausable Point Wildlife Management Area**
An interesting five-mile circuit tour of extensive marsh areas amid the wide meanders of the Ausable Delta and at the mouth of the Little Ausable River. The marsh is home to many species of waterfowl.
**Silver Lake & Taylor Pond**

These secluded lakes are great places to camp, fish or just paddle around. Dense woods and mountains surround the lakes. Take a short hike to the top of Silver Lake Mountain or Catamount for great views. Note: Parking fees for access.

**Lake Champlain**

Small vessels of any kind should avoid this large lake on all but the calmest days. Getting caught on the water in a small kayak or open canoe on a rough, windy day is a life-threatening situation. Watch the weather and pick your day carefully. Remain close to the shore and in the sheltered bays of the western shore. Take advantage of the morning and evening calms, and paddle from south to north with the prevailing winds. Taking these words of caution into consideration, it is possible to find the perfect day to paddle along the Lake Champlain shore.

One of the more scenic cruises is from Westport around Split Rock Point to the historic village of Essex, or to the sandbars and beach areas near the mouth of the Boquet River. The route offers dramatic views of the sheer cliffs that rise from the water at Split Rock Mountain: State land borders the water here and several trails leave from bays along this section of shore. However, the rocky shoreline provides little space for emergency landings. Start from Essex for a shorter round-trip cruise to Split Rock Point and views of its historic lighthouse. The lake's maximum depth of 400 feet is found just off this point. Explore the waters in sheltered Willsboro Bay, or paddle out to state-owned Schuyler Island (about 1 mile). Several campsites can be found along the island's rocky shore but there is also poison ivy so be careful.

**Boquet River**

Canoeable at higher water levels in the spring, this river offers trips of varying lengths and difficulty. From starting points below Split Rock Falls, a fast current winds through a narrow channel with mild Class II rapids and one short carry. There are few boulders in the 11-mile stretch to Elizabethtown. The next 6.5-mile section to the Northway overpass becomes more difficult with a tricky Class III drop and rapids. The next 25-mile stretch to Lake Champlain is best done as a series of short day trips due to the waterfalls and dams at Wadhams, Boquet, Whalonsburg, and Willsboro which would require long carries. Overall this is a fairly easy cruise through pasture lands and wooded hills, best done at high water levels. There are limited locations for putting in or taking out, and a very small amount of public land along the river.

Paddlers should check guidebooks and other sources to determine where legal put in and take out sites are located.
Adirondack Waterways

Black Lake, Cranberry Lake, Grass River, Little River, Massawepie Area, Oswegatchie River, Raquette River

Black Lake
Black Lake’s irregular shoreline, midlake shoals, rocky points, expansive weedbeds and many islands contribute to the area’s scenery and provide a favorable habitat for thriving populations of bass and panfish.

Lower Oswegatchie River
A gentle section of the Oswegatchie starts near Gouverneur and flows 65 miles to Ogdensburg where it flows into the St. Lawrence River. The river is wide and slow-moving here as it passes beside low-rolling hills, rock ledges, marshes and pasture land. Scenic cliffs line the shore near Oxbow. There are carries at the dams and most of the rapids can be portaged or run by experienced paddlers. Numerous access points permit trips of varying lengths.

Middle Branch Oswegatchie River
The Middle Branch plunges over waterfalls and through a rocky gorge. A drop of 90 feet in the first two miles gets the adrenalin going with an exciting mix of waterfalls and Class III rapids. Scout for possible runs or carries along impassable sections, such as the narrow Juice Falls. The second half of this 12-mile run is a calm Class I flatwater that winds through marsh and woodland.

Oswegatchie River
From Newton Falls to Hainesboro the river drops over 970 feet. Some areas are hard to access and there are many Class II-VI rapids and impassable ledges and dams. Water levels may fluctuate due to dam releases.

North Branch Grass River
Enjoy a mix of rapids and flatwater on this 16.5-mile paddle. What starts as a meandering river in a marsh quickly changes to Class II rapids. Class IV rapids and a moderate-sized double hydraulic are met before reaching the 50-foot Harper Falls, where a carry is required.

Lampson Falls Area
This spectacular stretch of the Grass accommodates a range of paddling skills. The first 4.5 miles is a winding flatwater, then, at the 40-foot Lampson Falls, the river abruptly changes. Over the next 7 miles the river drops 220 feet over nine dramatic cascades and plunges rated up to Class V. A speedy 4.3 miles of almost continuous Class II rapids follows. Only experts should attempt paddling the lower section.

Lower Grass River
The Lower Grass River from Canton to Massena (36 miles) can be paddled with several short portages along the way.

Raquette River Reservoirs & Beyond
27+ miles of the Raquette is now a series of reservoirs. Orion Power New York maintains carry routes, picnic areas, boat ramps, beaches and campgrounds. Below the reservoirs, river travel continues on a series of smaller reservoirs at Hannawa, Potsdam, Norwood and Norfolk. Further downstream, between Raymondville to Raquette River Village, are 14.5 miles of untamed river that can be paddled when water levels are adequate, run or carry around any rapids.

South Branch Grass River
The Tooley Pond Tract includes a long section of the South Branch Grass River. The upper section to Rainbow Falls is good for canoeing with carry trails around waterfalls. Access is via Spruce Mountain Road. A carry trail above Rainbow Falls leads to parking on Tooley Pond Road. Below Rainbow Falls, the river and its many waterfalls are more suitable for expert kayakers and shoreline users.

Cranberry Lake Outlet
Starting 1.8 miles downstream from the Ri. 3 bridge the gradient of the river changes into a winding flatwater which culminates at the Newton Falls reservoir.

Massawepie Area
Pond-Hop among the many small lakes near Massawepie Lake or paddle 8.5 miles through the Massawepie Mire and Grass River Flow. (closed to the public from June 15 to August 31.)

See page 7, 11 for Waterways to the East.

See page 12 and 14 for Waterways to the South.
**Adirondack Waterways**

**Bog River, Blue Mtn. Lake, Cranberry Lake, Forked Lake, Lake Lila, Long Lake, Lows Lake, Oswegatchie River, Raquette Lake & River, Tupper Lake, Whitney Wilderness**

**Cranberry Lake**
Flows and bays extend in every direction; great for exploration and refuge on windy days. Hiking trails originate from the lakeshore leading to remote ponds and overlooks. There are 46 designated campsites.

**Oswegatchie River**
Starting at Inlet, you must first paddle upstream on this scenic winding river. Stopping at a campsite along the way may be more enjoyable than staying in the High Falls area, which is often filled to capacity. Above the falls, you will leave the crowds behind as you lift over beaver dams, paddling deeper into a remote wilderness. The 40-mile round-trip paddle takes a minimum of three days—two days up and one day down. Several hiking trails are accessible from points along the river.

**Lows Lake & Bog River Flow**
Starting from the lower dam, this 11-mile paddle, with one short carry at the upper dam, traverses a beautiful narrow waterway. The wide expanse of Lows Lake opens up at journey’s end with marshes to the south and a backdrop of rugged mountains to the north. Islands and bays provide refuge on windy days. 39 designated campsites are found on Lows Lake and along the access channel. For the ambitious, a three-mile carry at the west end of the lake leads to the Upper Oswegatchie River. Your efforts are rewarded with a good dose of wilderness and an 18-mile downstream cruise to your take-out at Inlet.

**Lake Lila**
Lake Lila has 17 campsites, 7 islands, sandy beaches and tall white pines. A 3-mile carry leads from the parking area to the sandy launch site. Climb Frederica Mountain for a panoramic overview of the area. Explore the winding route of Shingle Shanty Brook.

**Bog River**
The lower Bog has 7 miles of technical Class III water which includes unnavigable drops at 6’ Split Rock Falls and the 30’ Pa’s Falls. High water levels and expert level skills are required.

**Raquette River**
From Long Lake to Tupper Lake (30 miles) the Raquette meanders between sandy wooded banks with just one carry at Raquette Falls. Traveling with the current, you can easily enjoy some fishing and bird watching. Campsites and lean-tos are found along the way. Stony Creek Ponds outlet and Indian Carry provides access north to the Saranac Lakes Chain.

**Raquette Lake**
The many bays of this large lake will provide hours of exploration, keep your eye out for some of the historic Great Camps. Explore the two-mile channel of South Inlet and Browns Tract Inlet where a one-mile carry connects to Eighth Lake on the Fulton Chain. To the north, an easy half-mile carry leads to Forked Lake.

**Little Tupper Lake & Round Lake**
The William C. Whitney Wilderness includes Little Tupper Lake, Round Lake and Rock Pond—which are all connected via channels and have designated campsites. Little Tupper is six miles long and has several islands. Moderate winds can create rough water on these lakes. Anglers will enjoy catch-and-release fishing for native brook trout. A canoe carry route from Rock Pond to Lake Lila links a series of small ponds and carries to Shingle Shanty Brook.

**Forked Lake**
State land borders the southeast shore, and the east and west end of this 7-mile lake; the rest is privately owned and undeveloped. The downstream route to Long Lake is a mix of flat and fast water and carries.

**Long Lake**
The prevailing winds are usually to your back on this 14-mile “long” lake. Campsites and lean-tos are found on state land along the eastern shore, north of Long Lake Village.

**Blue Mountain Lake**
10 islands on this mountain-ringed lake are part of the forest preserve. Explore the islands before heading west to the outlet, under a bridge and into narrow Eagle and Utopiana lakes. A half-mile carry at the west end of the lakes leads to the Marion River which flows gently through meadow and marsh to Raquette Lake and routes to the north and south.
Harris Lake, Henderson Lake, Hudson River, Newcomb Lake, Rich Lake, Schroon River & Lake

Newcomb Lake
Hitch a ride for you and your canoe (fee) on a horsedrawn wagon down a 4.5-mile dirt access road (closed to vehicles) to Newcomb Lake where you can explore both the lake and the partially restored structures of the Great Camp Santa oni.

Harriss Lake & Rich Lake
Start on the public beach or boat launch on Harris Lake for a scenic roundtrip cruise. The flatwater channel between the lakes has some riffles and a cary. Do not proceed beyond the Route 28N bridge or you will be committed to running the turbulent Hudson River Gorge.

Avoid approaching wildlife too closely, especially when they are nesting or have young with them.

Henderson Lake
Privately owned since 1826, the public now has paddling and fishing access on Henderson Lake and Lake Jimmy. Surrounded by tall mountains, Henderson Lake is very scenic with steep, rocky shorelines and many secluded coves to explore. The water is very deep and clear. There is a quarter-mile carry past a gate to the put-in from the Upper Works hikers’ parking area. Paddlers looking for a challenge and even more solitude may want to attempt the adventurous trip up to Preston Ponds and Duck Hole. The two-mile carry from northwest Henderson Lake to Upper Preston Pond is steep and difficult but the rewards in scenic beauty and solitude are great. Once on Upper Preston, continue to the outlet and access Lower Preston Pond from a short carry. From Lower Preston, it is a short bushwack to Duck Hole. The trip is about five miles from beginning to end.

Upper Hudson River
Three-mile-long Sanford Lake is a long narrow lake flanked by tallings from an old mine. From there the river meanders through a marsh for the next six miles to a bridge. After passing beneath the bridge, the river begins to drop more rapidly for several miles with some Class III rapids in a narrow channel. Below this point the river resumes its quiet meanderings to the outlet of Harris Lake on the right.

Upper Hudson River & Hudson River Gorge
The 12 miles from Newcomb to the Indian River is a beautiful remote stretch of the Hudson River (bordered by private land), with some fast sections and a steep chute rated Class III at Orr Falls. This otherwise inviting section of river leads directly into the turbulent Hudson River Gorge which packs in a series of difficult Class V rapids with powerful hydraulics, souse holes and high, standing waves. These 13 miles are for expert paddlers only. Several outfitters offer rafting trips through the Gorge. Water releases from Indian Lake maintain high water levels through June, and in September and October. Open canoes should not be used here except by experts at mid-summer water levels.

The Hudson River
High on the shoulder of New York’s highest peak, Mt. Marcy, is the highest pond source of the mighty Hudson River, Lake Tear of the Clouds. From this humble beginning the Hudson flows 275 miles to New York City and the Atlantic Ocean. In stages, the Hudson progresses from a small stream to one of the finest whitewater runs in the East to the wide shipping lanes of the Hudson Valley. An avenue for commerce and trade as well as recreation, the Hudson River is New York State’s premier river.

Upper Schroon River
The 15-mile stretch of the Schroon River from North Hudson to Schroon Lake is an easy Class I flatwater cruise with one carry. Six miles into the trip, at four-foot Schroon Falls, wildlife sightings are frequent as you travel along this slowly meandering river. Take out just below the Rt. 74 bridge or continue further downstream and enjoy mountain views from the open waters of beautiful Schroon Lake.

MAP KEY
- paddling routes
- motorized vessels prohibited
- some restrictions to motorized vessels
- physical barriers to motorized vessels, ex. waterfalls, culverts, etc.
Adirondack Waterways

Beaver River, Big Moose Lake, Black River, Fulton Chain of Lakes, Francis Lake, Moose River, Moss Lake, Sand Pond-Mud Pond, Stillwater Reservoir

See page 11 and 12 for Waterways to the North.

Please be considerate of other users on the waterways. Many of the waterways are utilized by motorboats; paddlers should avoid using marked channels or keep to the edge of them as much as possible.

Beaver River Canoe Route

Enjoy a 14-mile paddle through a series of reservoirs and channels which begins just below the Mosher Powerhouse and continues to the High Falls Pond take-out. Maintained by Orion Power New York, the route requires six portages totaling slightly more than two miles. There are designated campsites on the Soft Maple Reservoir. For more information and a detailed route brochure call 1-877-85-ORION.

Sand Pond-Mud Pond Area

Access to Sand Pond—part of the Croghan Tract—is via logging roads and a new 2-mile universally accessible trail and carry from the parking area. Its marshy shores support an abundance of waterfowl and wildlife. Long Pond, Rock Pond and Mud Pond are connected by narrow corridors of stream which are best paddled at high water levels. On the east end of Mud Pond is a handicapped accessible dock, outhouse and parking area. Below Mud Pond there are two waterfalls, a carry trail leads to the base of the first waterfall. Then there’s a 7-mile paddle to takeout at a footbridge above the second waterfall.

Stillwater Reservoir

The nine-mile-long reservoir is surrounded by state land and 46 designated campsites are situated on scenic points and bays. Caution is advised on windy days as the water can get very rough. The area is known for its large brown population and great fishing. Summer weekends can be busy with motorboat traffic.

Big Moose Lake

Several interesting bays, marsh areas and trails. The trails start from the lake and lead into the Pigeon Lake Wilderness where there are campsites and lean-tos on Russian and Gull Lakes (half-mile carry) and the remote Sister Lakes (9 miles). Public access from Dunn’s Marina for a fee.

Black River

From Lyons Falls to the Carthage dam are 44 miles of uninterrupted flatwater winding gracefully between the Adirondacks and the Tug Hill Plateau. There are a variety of access points and services along the way.

Francis Lake

Stillwater Road provides easy access to this beautiful lake. You’ll find campsites near the put-in and on the southern shore. There is a universally accessible trail to the lake and small dock for water access.

North Branch Moose River

Along this slow-moving, meandering strip of river you’ll travel 11 miles in complete wilderness isolation. Wildlife and birds are abundant along this branch of the Moose.

Lower Moose River

Expert whitewater skills are required for running these 17 miles of demanding Class V+ rapids with colorful names like Froth Hole, Mornmaster and Elevator Shaft.

Middle Branch Moose River

As you float down through this beautiful woodland valley the Moose gradually picks up tempo with some exciting Class III rapids. There is a carry at a low dam and at Nelson Falls, a Class IV drop.

Fulton Chain of Lakes

The famous 16-mile Fulton Chain is a busy boating route. From First Lake to Fifth Lake the waterway is continuous and lined with summer cottages. Two carries connect the remaining lakes which are less-developed and have several campsites and lean-tos. From Eighth Lake, a one-mile carry connects to Raquette Lake and northern routes.
Adirondack Waterways

Cedar River, Hudson River, Indian Lake, Jessup River, Kunjamuk Creek, Lake George, Piseco Lake, Sacandaga River, Schroon River

See page 12 and 13 for Waterways to the North.

Cedar River Flow–Moose River Plains
Cedar River Flow is tucked in the mountains far from the main road. Explore the wilderness shoreline and remote narrow inlet channel. A variety of lakes and ponds are accessible via 40 miles of dirt roads in the Moose River Plains Wild Forest.

Indian Lake
Snowy Mountain’s rugged cliffs and fire tower stand out above the western shore. Take in the view from Baldface, a short 1.26-mile trail starts from Norman’s Cove. This is just one of the many Adirondack lakes where you can enjoy island camping. Reservations are required during peak season.

Jessup River
This is an interesting four-mile cruise which may involve lifting over log jams or beaver dams. It is best canoed at higher water levels in the spring. Look for the short trail that leads to a waterfall just prior to entering Indian Lake.

Sacandaga Lake Area
These two large headwater lakes are connected by a short channel. From Sacandaga Lake, paddle up to Mud Lake or carry to beautiful Fawn Lake.

Kunjamuk Creek
The 7-mile round-trip paddle to Elm Lake may include lifting over several beaver dams. Explore the four-mile stillwater channel of the Sacandaga.

Piseco Lake
Piseco Lake offers some interesting side trips, such as paddling up Fall Stream to Fall Lake. Only two miles further upstream, and several beaver dams later, is Vly Lake.

Lower West Branch
An exciting eight-mile run with up to Class III rapids. Spring is the best time to attempt the steep 55 feet per mile gradient.

East Branch Sacandaga River
This eight-mile section of the East Branch has a gentle drop with some Class II rapids. It is often too shallow to paddle during the summer. Take out at the unnavigable Griffins Falls, a drop of 20 feet.

Sacandaga River
13 miles of almost continuous white water with up to Class III rapids is briefly interrupted by Lake Algonquin four miles into the run. Below the outlet dam, the race continues with a drop of 47 feet in the next 2.5 miles and some Class II water. A final Class II-III section follows to take-out at Hope. High water levels are best.

Lower Hudson
The Lower Hudson is broad and shallow. The current is a swift Class I but obstacles are few except at low water levels when sandbars may impede progress down this 17-mile stretch of river. Take out is one mile above the Hadley Luzerne Falls which are dangerous and should not be approached.

Lake George
Mountains surround Lake George and its crystal clear water is mostly spring fed. A wealth of islands and small bays invite exploration by canoe or kayak but the lake is large, 32-miles long, and one of the best ways to explore it may be by sea kayak, over the course of several days. Resorts and services of all kinds line the shore. Camp on 50 state-owned islands or at several state campgrounds along the shore; reservations are required and dogs are not allowed on islands.

Sacandaga River
Below the Stewart Bridge Dam on Great Sacandaga Lake is three miles of guaranteed Class II and III whitewater. Play here everyday, all summer long thanks to daily water releases.

Lower Schroon River
The Lower Schroon from Schroon Lake (27 miles) is a mixture of long flatwater sections and some exciting Class III-IV white water, such as “The Big Drop,” which you may want to scout before running. Adjacent roads provide easy access. Some access is limited to Public Fishing Rights.

MAP KEY
- paddling routes
- motorized vessels prohibited
- some restrictions to motorized vessels
- physical barriers to motorized vessels, ex. waterfalls, culverts, etc.

See page 14 for Waterways to the West.
Camping is a tradition in many families and a beloved hobby for the thousands of people each year who flock to the woods for some restorative quality time with nature. This summer, why not try a self-sustained camping trip to one of the Adirondacks’ beautiful on-water or island camping destinations? A more rustic take on the traditional tent camping experience and an altogether different way to get into nature than with an RV, island camping is one of the most rewarding ways to experience the outdoors. Don’t be intimidated by the self-sufficient nature of a camping trip that doesn’t include a vehicle. An excursion into nature in a canoe or kayak can deliver a truly rewarding and unique experience. If you want to truly feel the peace, calm, tranquility and beauty of nature there’s no better way to do it than on a remote camping adventure.

The Adirondacks are teeming with opportunities for campers to shed excess baggage and leave hectic schedules on the shore as they set out for a few days or weeks of camping in some of the best-preserved natural areas in the country. Options range from state-operated island campgrounds to informal, primitive sites secluded in the most tranquil and remote spots in the Adirondack Park. Campers can choose their comfort level, keeping in mind that they’ll have to plan for and bring all food, gear, and necessary supplies before starting out, and to remove all refuse when vacating the campsite. The trade-off for this feat of planning and packing is unparalleled—a true, unadulterated experience in exploring, enjoying, and becoming acquainted with the great outdoors. This is the way the original Adirondack guides and early campers and naturalists did it, and though technology has upgraded the tools and supplies necessary for building a fire, cooking a meal, and staying out of the elements, the spirit of the Adirondacks remains untouched in these places. It whistles through the trees late at night or washes up in waves on a beachside site, and is the same spirit that has attracted campers for over one hundred years. Here, the very soul of the Adirondacks is within reach. It circles in smoke around campfires and twinkles from amongst the breathtaking array of stars in the night sky. It wakes you with the haunting call of a loon and rises in the morning mist off the lake.

While it may seem that having such a rustic and self-reliant experience should be reserved for more seasoned campers, one of the most meaningful parts of the adventure is experiencing it for the first time—and it’s not hard to get going. Proper gear is easy and relatively inexpensive. Outdoor shops, at home, and in the Adirondacks,
have staff trained to outfit these types of trips, and many have rental equipment - including canoes and kayaks - that can be used for a fraction of the purchase price. With the addition of your own choice in amenities and some easily-stowed gear, you'll be on your way.

Many times, the most difficult part of the trip is choosing from the variety of places to go. In the Central Adirondacks, Alger Island, on Fourth Lake near Inlet, has 15 lean-to sites, and 2 tent sites with fireplaces as well as picnic areas, hibachis and pit privies. A hiking trail winds around the island and campers can explore their surroundings on Fourth Lake, or use Alger Island as a one-night stop on a multi-day paddling excursion. As in all New York State campgrounds you must register and pay a nightly camping fee. The Fulton Chain of Lakes, which runs north from the island to reach Eighth Lake, can provide any variety of on-water fun and days of opportunities to play and explore. If you forgot anything or need a quick fix of civilization the nearby village of Inlet can satisfy any on-land needs.

Continuing on from the Fulton Chain, wilderness camping experiences can also be found on Raquette Lake, Long Lake, and the Raquette River, where island and shoreline campsites are found in abundance. Raquette Lake boasts lean-tos on nine sites scattered around the lake, some set back and requiring a carry. Long Lake and the Raquette River offer a variety of sites including many lean-tos.

A little farther north are two great destinations. Saranac Lake Islands Public Campground, on Lower and Middle Saranac Lakes is a New York State-owned campground with 87 campsites, including five lean-tos. From here campers can explore the Saranac lakes, Saranac River, and the surrounding shorelines that offer a number of hiking trails, including the popular Ampersand Mountain trail which starts from a beach on the south shore of Middle Saranac Lake.

The St. Regis Canoe Area, with access points located along State Route 30 just a few miles away from Saranac Lake, is the only designated canoe area in the state and the largest of its kind in the Northeast. The area is a veritable playground for canoeists and kayakers—with dozens of designated campsites and camping areas, including an occasional lean-to. Encompassing over 19,000 acres, the St. Regis Canoe area consists of over 58 ponds and small lakes dotted with islands and ringed with miles of uninhabited shorelines.

Much more than just a camping or paddling destination, this area invites a peaceful experience of solitude in nature. A few ponds are accessible without a carry, for those who prefer to pick a place and stay there; but hiking trails and canoe carries dot the majority of the route, so it’s a good idea to pack light and be ready to carry gear from one spot to the next. The portage trails here are short so carrying isn’t as strenuous as it sounds. It’s easy to enjoy vistas around each turn in the trail and to appreciate the area’s pristine beauty with each step. This is the ideal spot to turn a beeping smartphone or email inbox into a distant memory. The St. Regis Canoe Area is a must-do for anyone who truly loves the outdoors.

As with any camping or hiking trip, make sure to bring up-to-date topographical maps and the gear and information you need before setting out. With the exception of official DEC Public Campgrounds like Saranac Lake Islands and Alger Island, most sites don’t take reservations but have a registration box at the area’s launch. In most cases, camping is free, but a list of regulations is available at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s website, dec.ny.gov. More information, sources are listed on page 4 of this guide; at dec.ny.gov; and visitadirondacks.com. Wherever you choose to go - whatever type of trip suits you best - be sure to take advantage of this unparalleled opportunity to truly experience the best of camping in the Adirondacks.

_Teresa Farrell is a freelance writer. She can be contacted via email, tfwriter@jmfpublishing.com_
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Always check water conditions before you recreate. One source is Waterline: www.h2oline.com or call 1-800-452-1742 (fishing edition) or 1-800-452-1737 (boating edition).

* New York State Department of Health Study

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