

ADIRONDACK WATERWAYS



2015

ADIRONDACK REGIONAL TOURISM COUNCIL
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The Adirondacks: A Paddler's Paradise

By Teresa Farrell

An excursion into nature with a canoe, kayak or standup paddleboard is a truly rewarding experience. If you're wishing to immerse yourself in the peace, tranquility, and beauty of nature, you need look no further than a paddling trip and no further than the Adirondack Park. The Adirondack Park is a playground for paddling enthusiasts. Rivers and ponds, creeks, streams, and lakes ranging from tiny and remote to expansive and well-travelled are scattered throughout this incredible natural landscape, which encompasses 3,125 square miles of breathtakingly beautiful wilderness. With more than 3,000 lakes and 6,000 miles of rivers and streams, it's easy to find an escape, whether you want to enjoy the water for a few hours, spend a few days canoe camping, or embark on an epic excursion lasting a few weeks, thanks to the various well-established paddling routes that crisscross the park.

The Adirondacks provide paddling destinations for nearly every interest. Quiet creeks and meandering streams offer tranquil passages, broad lakes offer seemingly endless horizons with miles of shoreline to explore, and remote ponds and small lakes linked together by short carries and inaccessible by roads provide the chance to paddle back into the most remote reaches of the wilderness. The Adirondacks

are full of remote areas where nature remains pristine and untouched. A paddling trip offers the chance to escape into the wilderness and enjoy the best it has to offer, which can frequently be found in places you may never have known existed. Start your adventure from a roadside, put in and in just a few minutes civilization will feel like a distant memory. Travel through places where winding rivers twist through lush green forests and open spaces, where towering mountains line the horizon. Find a place to stop for a swim or a picnic, or pause to photograph



the stunning natural landscape that surrounds you. It's not uncommon to stumble across a remote oasis, perhaps in a place where sandy beaches crop up unexpectedly alongside a bend in the river and provide a perfect swimming spot.

The nearly silent nature of a canoe or kayak affords the chance to observe birds and other wildlife quietly without intruding or scaring them away. Great blue herons pick their way through shallow marshes, while otters, mink, and other small critters dart along the shorelines and slip into the water. Deer with fawns in tow can often be seen making their way gracefully down sloping, wooded banks with fawns in tow for a drink of water.

If you find this environment is simply too beautiful to leave, there's ample opportunity to extend your stay. The Adirondacks are teeming with opportunities for paddlers to shed excess baggage and leave hectic schedules on the shoreline and set out for a few days or weeks of wilderness camping. Shoreline and island campsites abound throughout the Adirondacks ranging from state campground with some amenities to designated sites (some with lean-tos), to informal wilderness locations. A day of paddling topped by a campfire gives an undeniable sense of peace, freedom, and relaxation. The stars are never as bright as when they're so far removed from the lights of the city and enhanced by pine-scented breezes rippling through the peaceful Adirondack night.

Are you ready to get on the water? The maps in this book are a great place to begin planning your own personal Adirondack paddling trip. But as with any wilderness excursion, make sure to bring up-to-date topographical maps and any gear and information you may need before you set out. Guide services and outfitters can be found throughout the Adirondacks. More information, including details on access, amenities, laws, and local services, is available at www.visitadirondacks.com and www.dec.ny.gov. 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 paddling in the Adirondacks.

See page 7 and 9 for Waterways to the North.

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 pond-hopper's paradise. Many carries are short and most routes can be done as an unencumbered day trip. The classic "Seven Carries 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 Carries 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, Spitfire 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 Tefft 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 River

The Saranac River is a slow-moving flatwater with one section of up to Class III water at Permanent Rapids just before Franklin Falls Pond. Carry around the falls on the adjacent road. A .4-mile carry leads from the dam on Franklin Falls Pond to Union Falls Pond.

East Branch Ausable River

The East Branch has some great spring paddling with Class II water and a tricky Class III boulder patch. You'll 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.

West Branch Ausable River

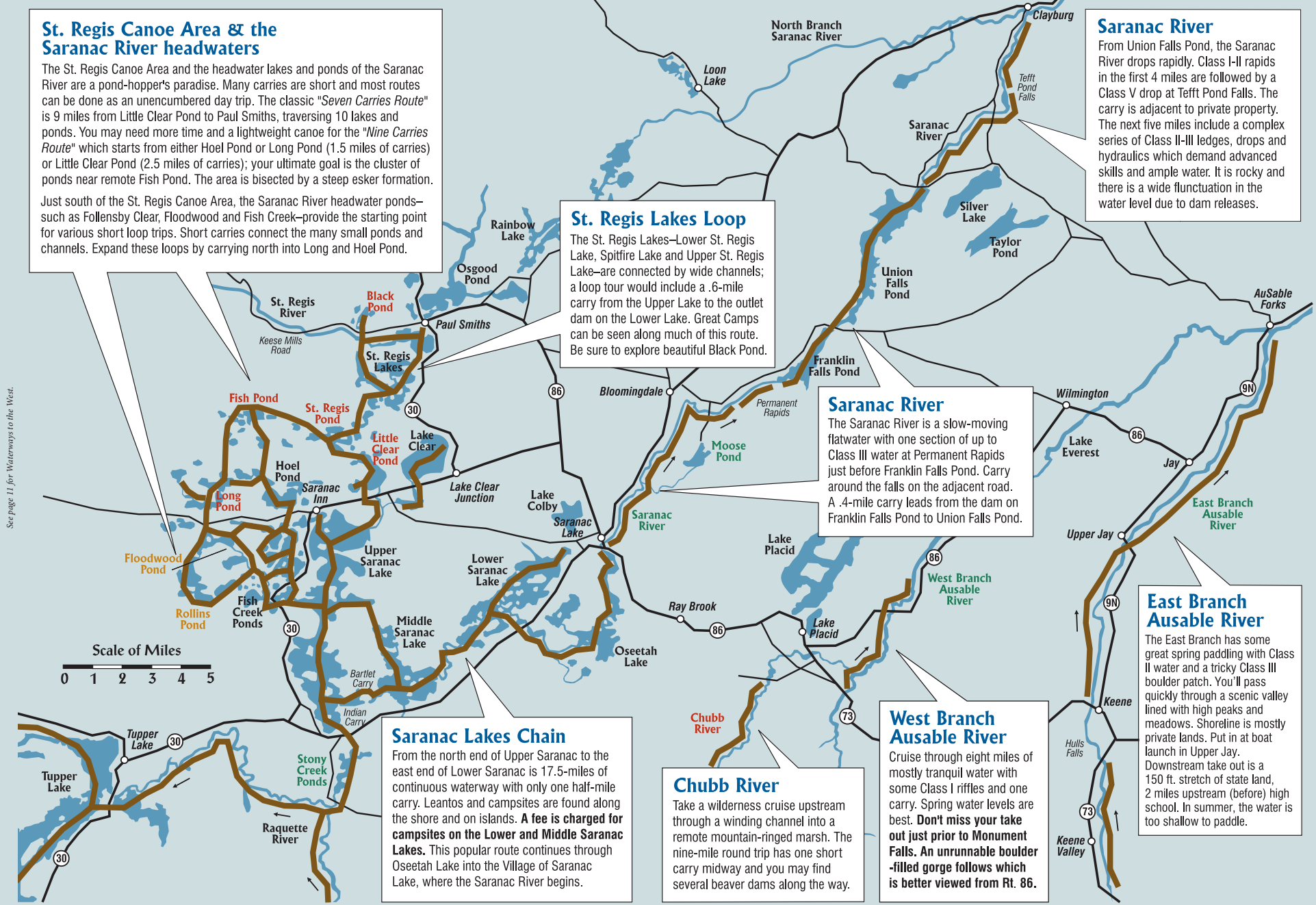
Cruise through eight miles of mostly tranquil water with some Class I riffles and one carry. Spring water levels are best. **Don't miss your take out just prior to Monument Falls. An unrunnable boulder-filled gorge follows which is better viewed from Rt. 86.**

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.

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.

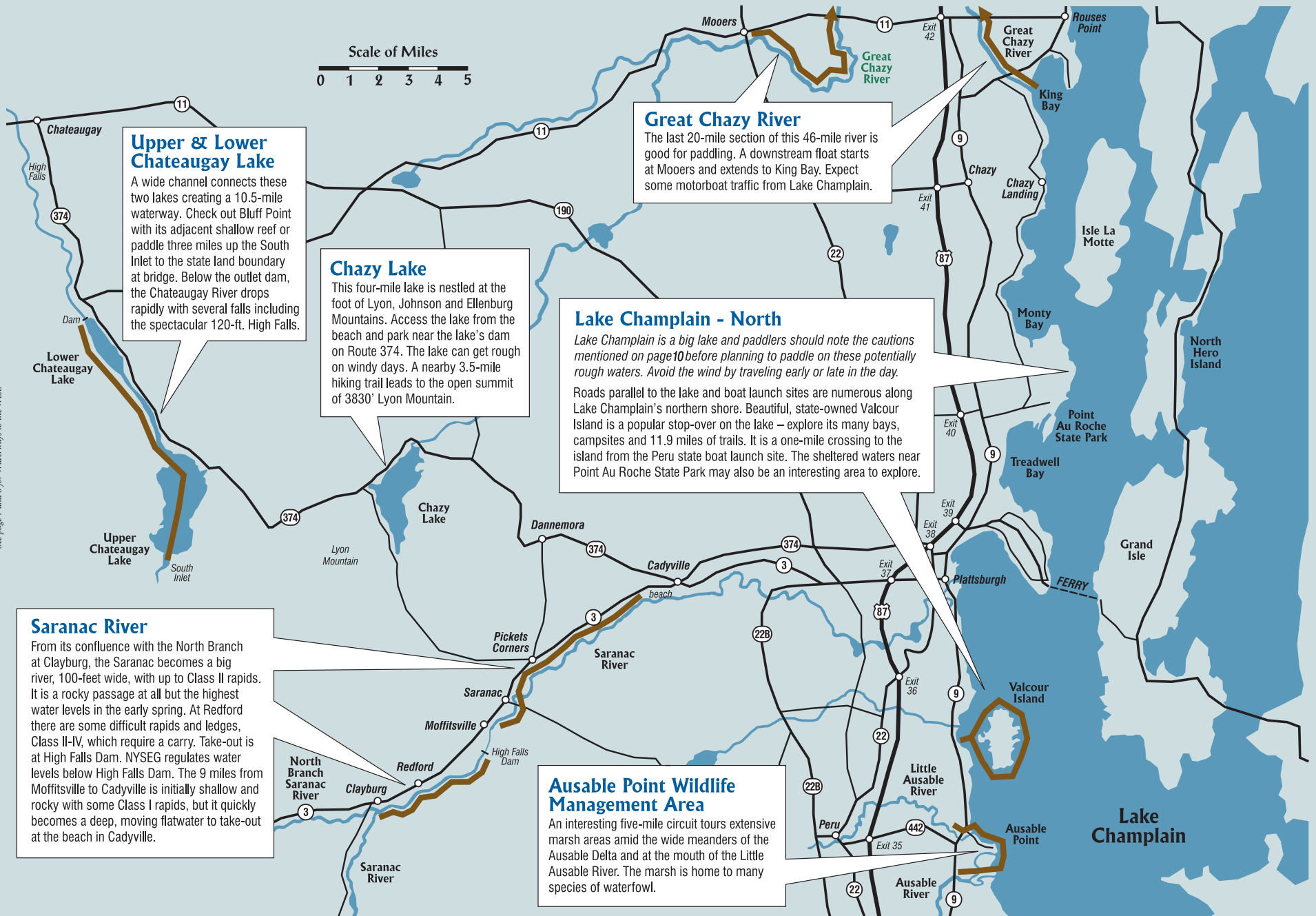


See page 11 for Waterways to the West.

See page 10 for Waterways to the East.

See page 12 and 13 for Waterways to the South.

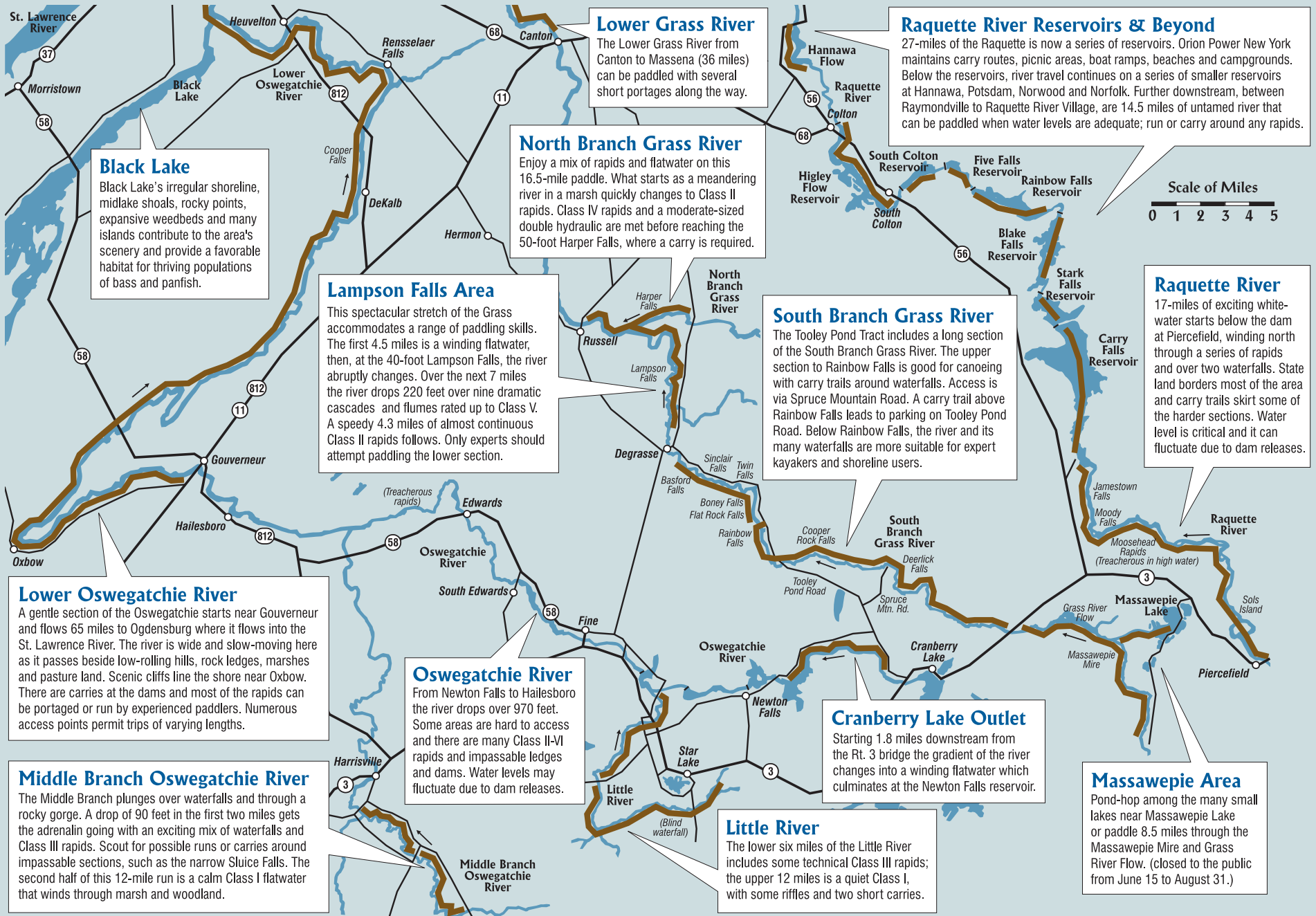
Ausable River, Chateaugay Lakes, Chazy Lake, Great Chazy River, Lake Champlain North, Saranac River



See page 7 and 8 for Waterways to the West.

See page 10 for Waterways to the South.

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 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.

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 flumes 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.

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.

Raquette River
17-miles of exciting white-water starts below the dam at Piercefield, winding north through a series of rapids and over two waterfalls. State land borders most of the area and carry trails skirt some of the harder sections. Water level is critical and it can fluctuate due to dam releases.

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.

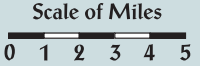
Oswegatchie River
From Newton Falls to Hailesboro the river drops over 970 feet. Some areas are hard to access and there are many Class II-VI rapids and impassable ledges and dams. Water levels may fluctuate due to dam releases.

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 around impassable sections, such as the narrow Sluice Falls. The second half of this 12-mile run is a calm Class I flatwater that winds through marsh and woodland.

Cranberry Lake Outlet
Starting 1.8 miles downstream from the Rt. 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.)

Little River
The lower six miles of the Little River includes some technical Class III rapids; the upper 12 miles is a quiet Class I, with some riffles and two short carries.



See page 7, 8 and 12 for Waterways to the East.

See page 12 and 14 for Waterways to the South.