



Trail Data

Northern Forest Canoe Trail A 740-Mile Historic Water Trail

Trail Highlights State by State

New York – 147 miles

Rivers and Lakes: Moose River, Fulton Lake Chain, Raquette River, Saranac River and Lake Champlain.

Old Forge to Saranac River is primarily scenic flatwater. It follows the long-established “Highway of the Adirondacks.” The Saranac River is a scenic, sometimes challenging, route off the Adirondack Plateau.

Vermont/Québec – 174 miles

Rivers and Lakes: Lake Champlain, Missisquoi River, North Branch of Missisquoi River, Lake Memphremagog, Clyde River, Nulhegan River, and Connecticut River.

Lake Champlain is the most historic lake in America, and very big. The Missisquoi River is mostly slow water through a pastoral landscape, with a few rapids and several carries, including Québec’s historic “Grand Portage” to Lake Memphremagog. The Clyde and Nulhegan rivers each flow through sections of wetlands, ponds, and rapids, and include several carries as they flow through the scenic Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.

New Hampshire -72 miles

Rivers and Lakes: Connecticut River, Upper Ammonoosuc River, Androscoggin River and Umbagog Lake.

The Connecticut is placid as it meanders to the Upper Ammonoosuc. The Upper Ammonoosuc is quickwater with a few rapids. The Androscoggin flows out of Umbagog Lake, with stretches of slowly flowing water punctuated by some rapids, and a wide, quiet reservoir with relics of logging days visible on the banks.

Maine – 347 miles

Rivers and Lakes: Umbagog Lake, Rapid River, the Richardsons, Mooselookmeguntic, and Rangeley lakes, South Branch - Dead River, Flagstaff Lake, Spencer and Little Spencer Streams, Whipple Pond, Moose River, Moosehead Lake, West Branch - Penobscot River, Chesuncook, Umbazooksus and Chamberlain lakes, Allagash River, and St. John River.

The Rangeley Lakes are very large and have attracted canoeists and anglers for centuries. The steep, tumbling Rapid River is portaged. The seasonal flow of the South Branch Dead River has a couple of rapid sections as it flows into the wide, scenic Flagstaff Lake. Grand Falls is a spectacular highlight at the confluence of the Dead River and Spencer Stream. The Spencer and Little Spencer watershed is remote, as is the beginning of the Moose River. The Moose flows through many lakes and some rapids on its way to the broad, storied stretches of Moosehead Lake. The West Branch Penobscot provides a historic connection between Moosehead and the large lakes that form the headwaters of the Allagash River. The Allagash Wilderness Waterway is a spectacular ribbon of lakes, ponds, rivers and occasional rapids winding through northern Maine to the wide St. John River on the Canadian border.

A Quick Look at the Trail

Rivers and Streams: 22

Lakes and Ponds: 56

Carries: 62, totaling 55 miles.

National Wildlife Refuges: 3

Towns: 45

Skills needed to paddle trail: Novice to expert. Flat and whitewater paddling, poling, lining, portaging.

Flow of the Trail: Downstream AND upstream. Water levels fluctuate due to spring runoff, drought, and dam releases.

Direction to Paddle: West to east if through-paddling. If doing sections, choose direction.

Proposed campsite/overnight option interval: 10-15 miles.

Landscape: Passing through hills and mountains, forests, farmlands and