



Northern Forest Canoe Trail Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge



Two-Day Itinerary

Trip Summary

Maps and Guidebooks

- [NFCT Map 8: Umbagog Lake to Rangeley Lake](#)
- [NFCT Guidebook](#)
- [AMC River Guide \(NH and VT\)](#)
- [Google Maps directions](#)

Activities

- Paddling and wildlife viewing in the [Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge](#)
- Hike to [Table Rock](#) and [waterfalls](#)
- Shopping and dining

Places to Stay

- [150 MAIN STREET LODGING ON THE ANDROSCOGGIN](#)
- [A Peace of Heaven B&B](#)
- [Errol Motel](#)
- [Magalloway River Inn Cabins](#)
- [Mount Dustan Country Store and Cabins](#)
- [Paradise Point Cottages](#)
- [Umbagog Lake State Park Campground](#)

Where to Eat

- [Bull Moose Restaurant](#)
- [Northern Exposure Restaurant and Black Bear Pub](#)
- [Trading Post Steak House](#)

Outfitters and Guides

- [L.L. Cote](#)
- [Northern Waters Outfitters](#)
- [Outdoor ESCAPES New Hampshire](#)
- [TNT Guide Service](#)

Local Events

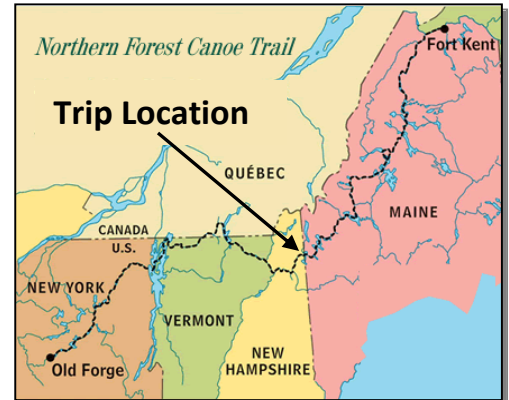
[NFCT Events Calendar](#)

NFCT Package Specials

- [Eagles on Umbagog Package](#)
- [Hike, Bike and Paddle Package](#)

~Last Updated October 12, 2011~

Explore the diverse habitats of [Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge](#) and experience for yourself why the Boston Globe ranked it among the 10 best paddling destinations in all of New England. Bald eagles, osprey, and one of the highest concentrations of nesting loons in New Hampshire can be seen on the waters, shorelines and tributaries of this lake. A quiet observer may also encounter moose, black bear and beaver. This two day itinerary describes some of the best lodging, dining and recreational experiences found in the area.



Day 1: Exploring the Lake and its Tributaries

There are several great choices for lodging in the area (see sidebar). Highly recommended are the cozy and clean [Magalloway River Inn Cabins](#). In the morning, you can make breakfast in your kitchenette or to head next door to the [Mt. Dustan Store](#) for a tasty egg sandwich. This fully stocked store also offers picnic supplies and boat rentals.



A unique camping experience is also available to visitors at the [Umbagog State Park Campground](#). This campground maintains drive up campsites, full service lake-side cabins and several remote campsites around the lake shore which are accessible only by boat. You can arrange to be transported to and from your site by Campground staff or paddle there yourself. Reservations are required and can be made through the [Umbagog State Park Campground](#) website. Canoe and kayak rentals are also available at the campground.

If you are interested in learning more about the Refuge, its wildlife and the people who have inhabited the landscape through history, consider a



stop at the [Refuge Headquarters and Visitor Center](#) (open Monday - Friday 8AM-4:30PM) located on Rte. 16, 4 miles north of Errol. In addition, you might consider hiring one of the several skilled guide services in the area. The guides at [Northern Waters Outfitters](#) or [Outdoor ESCAPES New Hampshire](#) provide shuttle services, paddling instruction and naturalist interpretation. [TNT Guide Service](#) has a wonderful Eagle Tour to the bald eagle nest on a pontoon boat.

If you are in need of any gear, maps or even a picnic lunch, [L.L. Cote](#) is a well-known outfitter in Errol with a wide selection of fishing, hunting and other outdoor recreation gear as well as souvenirs. NFCT [Guidebooks](#) and [Maps](#) are also available here and on our website.

When you are ready to paddle, consult [NFCT's Map 8](#) and the [AMC River Guide](#) (for NH and ME) to choose from a variety of ways to access Lake Umbagog's 7,000+ acres. Among the best options is the put-in on the Magalloway River at the Refuge Headquarters. Quiet paddlers often see great blue heron, loons, turtles and even moose along this slow moving current. After 4-6 miles, the Magalloway opens onto Lake Umbagog.

It is essential that you follow [Leave No Trace](#) guidelines as you travel through this sensitive area. Please respect Refuge officials' request to keep your distance from the marsh vegetation and to give wildlife, particularly nesting birds, a wide berth.

After a picnic lunch on the lake, you can either return the way you came or paddle south along the Androscoggin River towards Errol (provided you have arranged for a shuttle). This stretch of the Androscoggin is renowned for its diverse birdlife. Sweat and Harper's Meadows are home to loons, goldeneye and osprey and moose can often be seen grazing here.



After a full day of paddling, you will be ready for a feast at one of the area's restaurants. The Prime Rib at the [Trading Post Steak House](#) and the [Bull Moose Restaurant and Lounge](#) draws locals and visitors alike. For those looking for a fine dining experience, the [Balsams Grand Resort Hotel](#) (*temporarily closed*) has an award-winning dining room (jackets are required after 6:00). The Panorama Grille at the Balsams also serves delicious dishes like grilled salmon salad or steak sandwiches.

Day 2: Paddle to Big Island or Hike to Table Rock

After breakfast, consider heading east to the public boat access on Rte. 26 in Cambridge, NH. From here you can paddle 3-4 miles to Big Island. This route is more exposed and, because the lake is shallow (average depth 15 feet), whitecaps form quickly on the open waters. Be cautious and assess weather conditions carefully before embarking on this journey. If you do choose to take this route, you will follow the southwestern shoreline to the Big Island where you can often observe osprey, loons and bald eagles. You can return the way you came or, on calm days, cross the open water west of the island and follow the shoreline back.

If your paddling muscles could use a break, consider a trip to view the [waterfalls](#) and dramatic cliff bands of Dixville Notch, 10 miles west of Errol on Rte. 26. You can hike to the top of the cliffs to a dramatic spot called [Table Rock](#). While you are in Dixville Notch stop and tour the historic displays at the [Balsams Grand Resort Hotel](#). This majestic hotel was built in 1898 in an era when visitors traveled to the region by train and horseback to enjoy its natural splendor in luxury.

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