

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

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.

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.

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. In the summer, when the water is too shallow for paddling, you'll see mostly anglers on a deceptively quiet river.

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.

