

KAYAKING THE BIG LAKE

By Arlene Schneller

There are small area lakes to paddle. Of course, be sensible when paddling the big lake. It can get rough fast, it is important to be aware of your surroundings. Several warning signs are fast approaching rain/thunder clouds, whitecaps off in the horizon that quickly approach shore and strong gusts of wind that start swaying tree tops. These are all warning signs to get off the lake quickly. Avoid the lake if waves form even the smallest whitecap, it makes it difficult to paddle, stay dry and to launch or take out.

When I tour any lake, even Lake Superior, if I have a choice, I prefer to paddle into the wind first, that way when I turn back to go home, I don't have to fight the wind with whatever energy I have left. I also check the weather report for the day.

My shortest kayak trip to Superior Falls (about 1-1/2 to 2 hours) gets rave reviews. We launch kayaks at Saxon Harbor. Our paddle begins inside the harbor's breakwater then take a right (east) outside of it and make your way to the shoreline. Stay close to the shore for safety; you only need to be in a foot or two of water. You'll see how clear the water is and view beautiful rock formations underneath. If the water is dead calm you can paddle to Superior Falls (yes, you can paddle up to the base of the waterfalls) in just 15 to 20 minutes.

If you are on the shore at Saxon Harbor, looking east, the waterfall is just after the shoreline erosion stops and the greenery starts. When you are on the water, watch for bald eagle nests, one in a deep ravine close to the lake, the other

is further into the woods in another ravine. Once arriving at the Montreal River, you paddle into it, which has a slight current. You can hear the waterfalls first then enjoy the incredible view just around the bend. You might spot a few anglers for trout and a peregrine falcon overhead.

My other suggested trips are paddling at Black River Harbor, paddle around the harbor area and take a short paddle up the Black River, the water is low and there are lots of boulders. Be sure to include a hike to Rainbow Falls while you are there. I like to take the rugged trail that starts just past the bridge, hiking up the steep hillside and through majestic tall hemlocks. From this vantage point you generally see the "rainbow effect" from the splashing falls.

We have also paddled from Black River Harbor to Presque Isle Park in the Porkies, but that is an 8 hour one-way day-trip and we have a trailer at the Porkies campground and haul our kayaks back. You can also fit in a hike to the Manido and Manebezho waterfalls while you are there.

Don't forget your sunscreen, life jacket, bottled water and a ziplock bag for your camera.



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