

# City of Watertown Black River Guide



I ♥ NY

1000 Islands & the St. Lawrence Seaway

Whitewater Rafting & Kayaking

Flatwater Canoeing & Kayaking

Fishing Access - Recreation Trails

## WHITewater PADDLING

The Black River is a playboater's dream. Surfing waves and rodeo holes abound. Many local boaters spend an entire day on the opening half-mile of the rafting run surfing the class 2-3 waves on "the first three sets" starting with Club House Turn and Burns Wall, a series of glassy three-foot waves perfect for surfing, before practicing rodeo stunts at the friendly hydraulic known as "Hole Brothers," a favorite play spot.

More play beckons downstream at Inner City Strife and Knife's Edge, the Black's most challenging drop (class 4-5). Below Glen Park Hydro, in The Gorge, you'll encounter: Three Rocks (class 3-4), Zig-Zag (class 3), Panic Rock (class 4), The Cruncher (class 3-4), and Rocket

Ride (class 3-5). The Lower Gorge contains two named class 3 rapids, Square Rock and Lost and Found, both prime play spots.

The opening half-mile is directly adjacent to parking areas near Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk Park and Newell Street. The entire shuttle from take-out in Brownville to Newell Street in Watertown is a mere 20 minutes round-trip. And for apres activities, you can't beat Watertown's numerous restaurants and bistros.

For some additional playboating, head to the eastern side of the City and the rodeo spot known as the Route 3 wave. This wave is best during the summer months when water flows are lower and can be accessed by paddling upstream from the put in at Waterworks Park or from the new access point from Marble Street Park on the north side of the river adjacent to the feature.

The Route 3 wave plays host to an international competition in late August/early September and has been paddled by boaters from around the world. But it's also gentle enough for novice boaters to handle. Nestled between two dams and with a nice gentle run out at the end of the wave train, this is an ideal park and play spot.

## WHITewater RAFTING

The Black River starts its descent off the Tug Hill Plateau in a series of waterfalls and rapids at Carthage and Felts Mills. Then, when it reaches Watertown, it makes its final tumultuous descent during a seven-mile stretch. This is where all the whitewater action takes place.

Starting below the Mill Street Dam in Watertown is a whitewater run that features 14 sets of class 3-4 rapids and a spectacular 20-foot waterfall. The kicker is that numerous upstream

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# Experience the Black River

## Stay & Play in Watertown, NY



Stay Smart!



### Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites

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### Days Inn Watertown/ 1000 Islands

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reservoirs guarantee dependable water levels throughout the summer! And the water is warm!

Area rafting companies offer guided trips in the spring, summer and fall. The run starts with three class 2-3 rapids that are often used by novice boaters as a training run or by experienced paddlers as a site for some quick summer play. Then the river flows quickly out of town, passing under I-81 before reaching the challenging class 5 drop at "Knife Edge."

Rafters continue their trip, after a portage at Glen Park Hydro, with a quick and exciting ride through a long series of rapids in a dramatic 200-foot deep canyon. The final section of the trip is a leisurely mile to the village of Dexter.



Late fall on the Black River, Turning Point Park, Carthage.

### OTHER PADDLING OPTIONS

If whitewater isn't your thing, check out the Black River's flatwater sections which are found behind some of the many dams. In Watertown you

can put in at the City's Rotary Cartop Boat Launch and paddle up to the base of the rapids outside the Village of Black River, a distance of about 3 miles one-way. In addition, you could paddle the one mile stretch from Dexter to Black River Bay or continue on and enjoy a tour of the bay.

Another interesting section of the Black River starts in Carthage which was once the northern terminus of the Black River Canal, a busy shipping route used during the 1800s. Starting from the aptly named Turning Point Park, you can explore up river for over 40 miles on nearly continuous flatwater.

### FISHING

The largest historic barriers to fish movement were at Great Falls in Watertown (where the Mill Street Dam is now located) and Long Falls at Carthage. During the 1980s, fish ladders were built around dams in Dexter and Glen Park to allow steelhead and chinook salmon from Lake Ontario to migrate upstream as far as Court Street in Watertown during the spring, late summer and fall spawning runs.

The Dexter area offers outstanding walleye and smallmouth bass fishing above and below the dam. Trout are stocked at two areas in Watertown and smallmouth bass are also caught here.

1,000 Island Region  
spring • summer • fall

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# Experience the Black River... All Summer Long!

*“Only five other rivers in the entire Eastern United States offer dependable summer class 4 whitewater.”*

Kayakers and rafters from all over have discovered the Black River to be a favorite spring AND summer destination. Because of a landmark water-sharing agreement between the companies along the river and the river’s recreational users, the Black River is ALWAYS open for business. The river is also special because it features areas for flatwater paddling as well as exciting rapids and kayak holes. Easy access via Interstate 81, and the numerous hotels and restaurants located near the river, makes Watertown a desirable site for competitions and vacations.



PHOTO CREDIT: Jan Brabant, Hudson River Rafting Company and Whitewater Challengers

The area near the handicapped accessible fishing pier at the City Rotary Launch Site is stocked annually with brown trout. Steelhead fishing is popular near the VanDuzee Street bridge where brown trout are also stocked and the DEC has a fishing access site. Walleye and pickerel are caught farther upstream and downstream of Watertown.

Between Carthage and Felts Mills the fishing is good below the dams and in the reach below Deferiet and Fort Drum. The placid waters above Carthage are home to at least 35 species of fish, most notably walleye pike, smallmouth bass, northern pike, brown bullhead, pickerel and rock bass.



Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk, Watertown.

## PARKS AND TRAILS

Several scenic parks and trails overlook the Black River—perfect spots for a picnic, mountain biking or just a quiet walk.

In Watertown, the Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk, Waterworks Park, Marble Street

Park, and Bicentennial Park all provide scenic riverside promenades and picnic areas. In the village of Black River you can explore walking and biking trails on Poors Island or take in the view from the Community Park Overlook. In Carthage, Turning Point Park has both a scenic riverfront walkway and a paved boat launch site.

Two recreation trails suitable for hiking, mountain biking and xc skiing parallel the Black River. The Great Bend-Felts Mills Recreation Trail winds along a hillside on the northern shore near Fort Drum. Another trail is the Black River Trail which offers a connection from the eastern outskirts of Watertown to the Village of Black River.



Black River Fest kayak clinic at Hole Brothers, Watertown.

## Whitewater Challengers

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## LOCAL RAFTING COMPANIES

### ADIRONDACK RIVER OUTFITTERS:

800-525-RAFT, 315-788-2297

### B.O.B. RAFTING: 315-785-9386

### HUDSON RIVER RAFTING:

800-888-RAFT, 315-782-7881

### WHITewater CHALLENGERS:

800-443-RAFT, 315-639-6100



## FORT DRUM

One of the most modern military installations in the USA, Fort Drum is home to the 10th Mountain Division. A long section of the Black runs adjacent to and through the Fort boundaries. Since the Fort is an active training site, access to its lands is off limits for all recreational activities except fishing from the banks and use of the Great Bend/Felts Mills Recreation Trail.

### WATERTOWN

- 21 Abe Cooper Site
- Brookfield Power Shoreline: access viewing area and trail
- 22 Brookfield Power Beebee Island
- 23 Black River Adventurers' Shop (specialty outdoor retailer)
- 24 Adirondack River Outfitters (whitewater rafting company)
- 25 Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk: picnic area and pavillion, river overlook
- 26 Tourist Information Center
- 27 Hudson River Rafting Company (whitewater rafting company)
- 28 "Hole Brothers:" park and play whitewater spot
- 29 DEC Fishing Access Site
- 30 Alex T. Duffy Fairgrounds: picnic area and river access

Note: The Black River has very fast moving water between the Village of Black River and Watertown, but it is mostly flatwater.

- 8 Great Bend/Felts Mills Recreation Trail - open to public

### Black River

### Felts Mills

### VILLAGE OF BLACK RIVER

- 9 Brookfield Power Kamargo - Poors Island Portage
- 10 Brookfield Power Kamargo - Poors Island Recreation Area (H): cartop launch, portage, shoreline fishing access and Interpretive Center
- 11 Brookfield Power Kamargo Portage: Poors Island to South Main Street
- 12 Black River Community Overlook Park
- 13 Brookfield Power Black River Portage and Shoreline Fishing (H)
- 14 Brookfield Power Black River Picnic Area (H): portage and shoreline fishing
- 15 NYS Parks Black River Recreation Trail: fishing, river access, hike/bike trail

### WATERTOWN

- 16 City Rotary Fishing Access (H) and cartop launch site
- 17 Waterworks Park: Park and Paddle, cartop launch site, riverside picnic area
- 18 Marble Street Park: river access and picnic area
- 19 Route 3 Wave: park and play whitewater spot
- 20 Brookfield Power Sewalls Island: cartop launch and shoreline fishing - Huntington St.

## CITY OF WATERTOWN

The Black River put the "water" in Watertown. In addition to being home to several outfitters and numerous access points to the river, the region's largest city offers many services and amenities. The river runs right through downtown Watertown where you'll find stores, restaurants and museums just a few blocks from whitewater rafting operations.

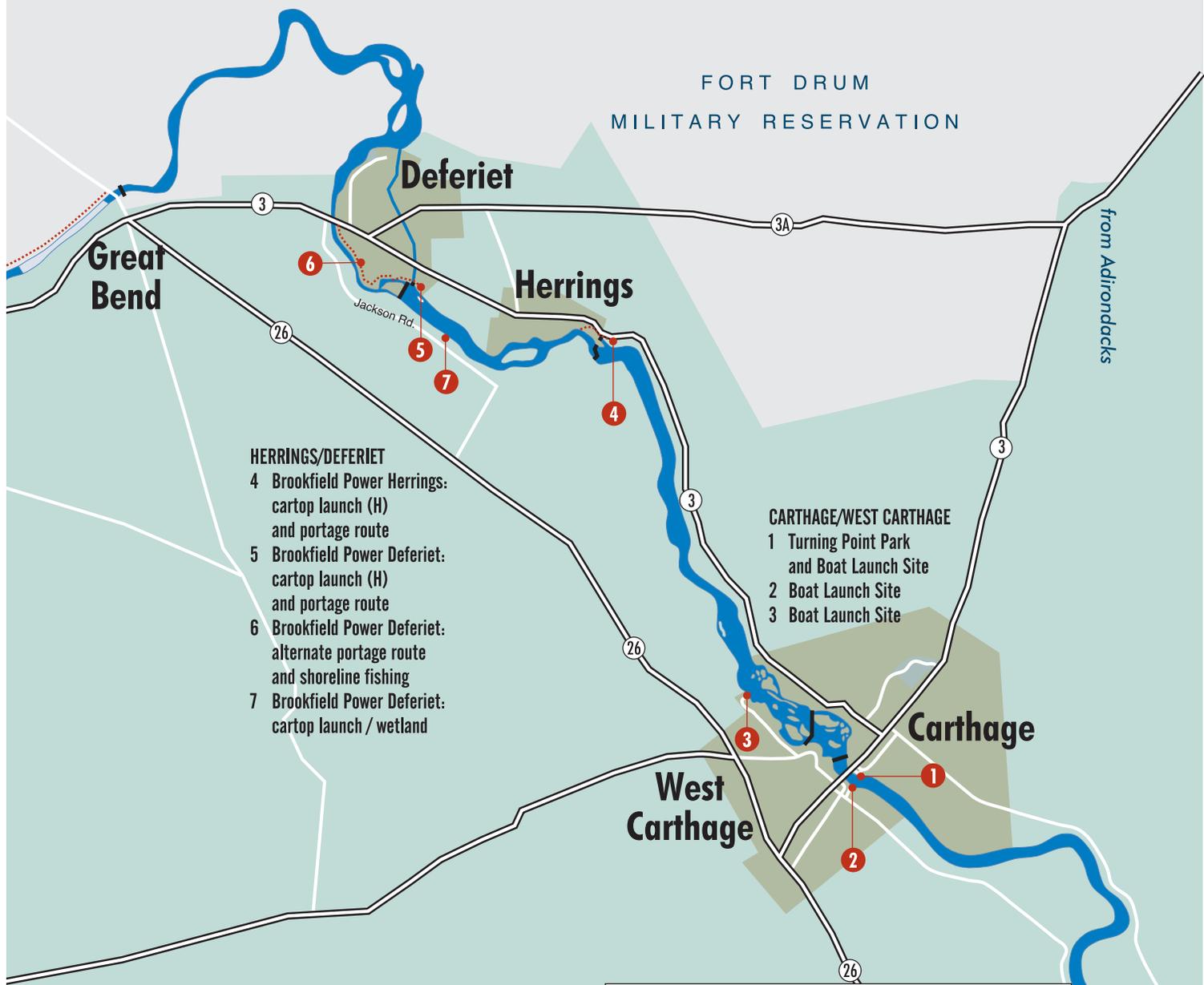
Another wild side of the city can be found at the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park on Watertown's southeast side. Here visitors can enjoy a look at the wildlife of Northern New York with a variety of exhibits featuring native species. The Zoo has a variety of things going on all year round. They can also enjoy a walk around the 375-acre park surrounding the Zoo or tee off at one of two golf courses in the City.

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from  
Lowville

FORT DRUM  
MILITARY RESERVATION



**HERRINGS/DEFERIET**

- 4 Brookfield Power Herrings: cartop launch (H) and portage route
- 5 Brookfield Power Deferiet: cartop launch (H) and portage route
- 6 Brookfield Power Deferiet: alternate portage route and shoreline fishing
- 7 Brookfield Power Deferiet: cartop launch / wetland

**CARTHAGE/WEST CARTHAGE**

- 1 Turning Point Park and Boat Launch Site
- 2 Boat Launch Site
- 3 Boat Launch Site

**CARTHAGE AND WEST CARTHAGE**  
 The charming villages of Carthage and West Carthage offer access to a large quiet water section of the Black River upstream to Lyons Falls; this area is well suited for boating and fishing. Below the rapids in Carthage is another stretch of flatwater that runs to the Hamlet of Herrings. The Carthage area offers many options for lodging, restaurants, and other services. The community also boasts a lovely area of historic structures on the National Register. Turning Point Park is so named because it was the northern terminus of the New York State Canal System's Black River Canal; the place where one had to turn around due to the rapids downstream.

 white water section	 public park	 flat water section	 28 points of interest
	(H) handicapped accessible		

KILOMETERS 

MILES 

from Adirondacks

from Lowville