

Where to Drop a Kayak

So you've gotten your new kayaks, paddles and life vests and you're looking to get out and enjoy some time on the water. There is nothing more scenic and relaxing than a good paddle on one of our pristine lakes, which also offer great wildlife viewing opportunities. Here are a few of our favorite places to drop a kayak in the water:

CHUB LAKE – This gorgeous and quiet spring fed lake actually feeds the mighty AuSable River. Nearly half of the lake is undeveloped and there are frequent sightings of eagles, hawks and deer along the shore. It is a very tranquil lake with crystal clear water. An intriguing little canal connects upper and lower Chub Lakes, with both offering an amazing afternoon adventure. Take Old 27 South to Old State Road, turn left on Old State for a few miles and look for Chub Lake Road, take this to the very end and the launch point is at the end of the road.

OPAL LAKE – Opal Lake is known as one of the clearest, most stunning lakes in Otsego County. With gentle turquoise waters and a sandy bottom, it's no surprise that paddlers and swimmers frequent this gem. Its quaint size and visible undeveloped island make it a perfect lake to loop all the way around. Located near the Michaywe development, it comes with a large boat launch area, sandy beach for relaxing and a restroom. This is truly one of our favorites. Take Old 27 South to Old State Road and turn left. Follow Old State Road for several miles, then turn left on East Opal Lake Road. Continue on this wide, dirt road, veering left just past Owl Road. The public access site will be in front of you.

THUMB LAKE – Sometimes called Lake Louise, this picturesque lake is located just north of Otsego County. Known for having a number of small coves and points which are perfect for exploring, Thumb Lake also boasts many undeveloped areas which makes for great scenery. There are two parts to this lake and the East side contains a large beach with plenty of parking and restroom facilities. We recommend dropping in at the Boating Public Access Site located at the extreme west end. Take Old 27 North to County Road C-48 (also called Thumb Lake Road), turn left and stay on this road approximately 5 miles and you will see the site after a large bend in the road. Parking and restroom facilities are available.

BIG LAKE – A little closer to downtown Gaylord you will find Big Lake. This is a nice size lake that is a bit more developed. It has a more circular shape, but also comes with a few nice little coves for exploring. Big Lake also has an island with a house on it, which you don't find often in Otsego County. Paddling along its crystal clear waters will make for a delightful afternoon. Take M-32 East approximately 5 miles to Big Lake Road turn right on Big Lake Road and travel about one mile. The public access is on your left. It has a gravel parking and launch area as well as a restroom.

DIXON LAKE – Dixon Lake is true gem and a favorite among locals. Its spring fed, crystal clear water is a great place for a quick dip to cool down. A good portion of the south end is undeveloped and excellent for wildlife viewing, fishing and exploring. This quaint lake is home to Sojourn Lakeside Resort, which in its heyday, was one of the swankiest dude ranches in the Midwest. Dixon Lake has one of the nicest launches around with a paved launch and parking area, wide public dock and restroom facilities.