

## LOCAL SPORTS

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### Outdoor Choices

# Pedal and Paddle Duet: Biking and Kayaking in Harmony

By Erin Fanning

Dozens of black-and-white dragonflies flew above me while the Boardman River tugged my kayak along. The deep forest vanished as the river sliced through a grassy meadow. Miles unfolded with a sense of anticipation for what Mother Nature might reveal next.

That anticipation also included mountain biking on the North Country Trail (NCT). Instead of a vehicle parked at the takeout, my bicycle waited for me, marking the second part of my biyaking adventure. For me, biyaking means simply using a bicycle, instead of two motorized vehicles, for the shuttle between the put-in and takeout, and few places are better biyaking destinations than Michi-

ingredients for endless outings.

The recommended biyaking routes (mileages are estimates) below are only a jumping-off point. With so many options, creating your own itineraries is part of the fun; all that's needed is a map and an adventurous spirit.

**Boardman River –**  
*NCT (bike: 8 miles;  
kayak: 4.5 miles)*

This short introduction to the Boardman River and NCT, a remote, multi-state trail, incorporates the best of both from rippling water to a ribbon of rolling single-track. The trip runs from Forks Forest Campground on Brown Bridge Road, southeast of Traverse City, to the takeout at Scheck's Place State Forest Camp-

*miles; kayak: up to 17 miles)*

The Sturgeon and North Central State Trail (NCST), a crushed limestone rail-trail, parallel each other from Trowbridge Road, south of Wolverine, to Indian River, creating perhaps the best biyaking combo in Northern Michigan. While the Sturgeon rushes through dense woods, meadows, and past charming cottages, the NCST meanders over mostly flat terrain, rambling through grassy fields for a relaxing bike ride. You can tackle the entire section, but there are also many access sites so shorter outings are plentiful. One of my favorites is from Scott Road Access Site, north of Wolverine, to Fisher Woods Road in Indian River (<https://michi->

Located east to southeast of Onaway, this section of the Black River, between Clark Bridge Rd. and Tower Dam, gives paddlers of all abilities many options from tackling the entire length to shorter trips with several access sites. The bike ride rambles along the paved and dirt Black River Road and sandy Clark Bridge Road, dipping in and out of forest and cruising over hills. Bald eagles join paddlers as they meander along, and otters have been spotted between Clark and Crocket Bridges. (<https://michiganbiyaking.com/2023/03/07/black-river-and-road-duo/>.)

While taking out at Tower Pond once, a boy stood at the end of the dock as if he'd stepped out of a Mark Twain novel. He held a fishing rod in his hand and waited, better to





ponds, 5,201 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, and 49,000 miles of rivers and streams? Combine that with Northern Michigan's wildlife, quiet country roads, tree-shrouded two-tracks, and twisting single-tracks and you have the

(<https://michiganbiyak-ing.com/2022/07/15/board-man-nct-adventure/>.)

**Sturgeon River –**  
**North Central State**  
**Trail (bike: up to 14**

**Black River –**  
**Black River Road**  
(bike: up to 14 miles;  
kayak: up to 18-20  
miles)

time occasionally seems to stop and it could just as easily be the 19th than the 21st century.

**Manistee River –**  
**Various country roads**  
(bike: 6 miles; kayak: 9 miles)

Although a popular river, this section of the Manistee, from the CCC Bridge Access Site to the West Sharon Access Site, experiences few kayakers, making it a solitary paddle through a quintessential Northern Michigan landscape. Located southeast of Kalkaska, the route includes biking along peaceful paved and sandy roads with only a few hills. The kayaking portion begins slow but the river's pace increases as you head downstream with a few lively ripples. (<https://michiganbiyak-ing.com/2022/08/20/manistees-ccc-to-west-sharon-tour/>.)

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**  
**ERIN FANNING HAS**  
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**GUIDE, MICHIGANBIYAK-ING.COM**



**Nature trying to retake the North Country Trail.**



**Navigating rapids on the Sturgeon River.**



**Peaceful Manistee River views.**



# TAKE A VET FISHING

A DAY of GIVING BACK

**BOYNE CITY, MI**

**Saturday, September 23, 2023**

**6:00am - 3:00pm**

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**Learn more and sign up at:**  
**[www.TakeaVetFishing.org](http://www.TakeaVetFishing.org)**

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