



Quinebaug River Paddle Guide



QUINEBAUG RIVER WATER TRAIL

A National Recreation Trail
in Massachusetts and Connecticut

First Edition – May 2012

THE
last
green
valley



Connecticut
Light & Power
A Northeast Utilities Company



Welcome!

Welcome to the Quinebaug River Water Trail. The Quinebaug River runs for almost 60 miles between Brimfield, Massachusetts and Norwich, Connecticut. Of that, nearly 45 miles are described in this Paddle Guide as part of the Quinebaug River Water Trail.

Almost nine miles of the Quinebaug will never be suitable for paddling due to re-engineering of the river for industrial and flood control purposes during the 19th and 20th centuries. Another six miles are not included in this edition because formal public access does not yet exist. With the help of paddlers like you, those miles will be added in the future.

This guide describes public-access launches and portages, as well as points of interest you will find along the way. Like all streams and rivers, the Quinebaug changes character every day, even hourly. While this guide cannot possibly predict your experiences on the water, it does provide basic information and sources for real-time information.

The guide also encourages you to ask questions, learn from others and make careful decisions before you head out. Ultimately, it's up to you to make good choices based on the weather, the river, your paddling expertise and equipment. More specific safety tips are suggested below.



Dedication

This guide is dedicated to Roger Hunt, a true friend of the Quinebaug River and The Last Green Valley.



What Is A Water Trail?

It is the combination of a waterway with paddle routes and segments, clearly described in maps and guides, managed for public access and conserved to protect land and water resources – the very resources paddlers come here to enjoy.

The Last Green Valley, Inc. is teaming up with paddlers, outfitters, towns, agencies and river groups to create water trails on the rivers of the National Heritage Corridor. For more information, or to join The Last Green Valley, please go to www.tlgv.org.

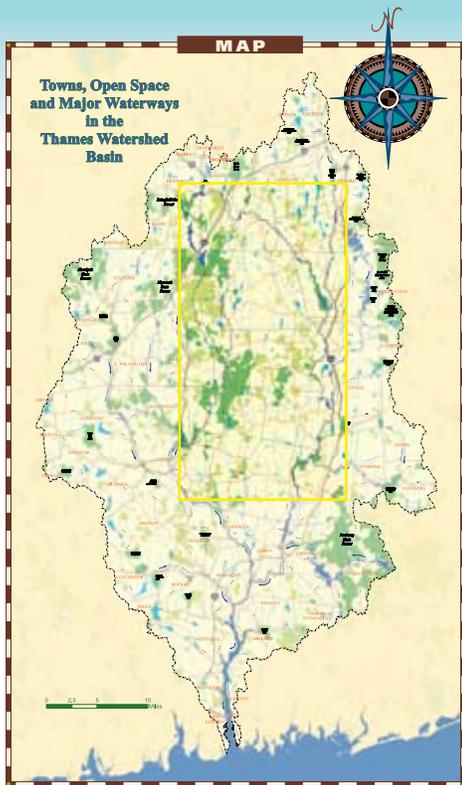


CAUTION: Do not use this guide as your only source of navigation information. Conditions on the river change constantly, sometimes drastically. It is your responsibility to be aware of changing conditions and the abilities of your group so your decisions lead to a safe trip.

What is a National Recreation Trail?

The Secretary of Interior recognizes “exemplary trails of local and regional significance” as National Recreation Trails (NRT) after a rigorous application process. The Corps of Engineers first received NRT designations for 10.8 miles of water trail on the Quinebaug, including segments in East Brimfield MA and West Thompson CT. During 2012, an additional 35 miles has been designated as National Recreation Trail!

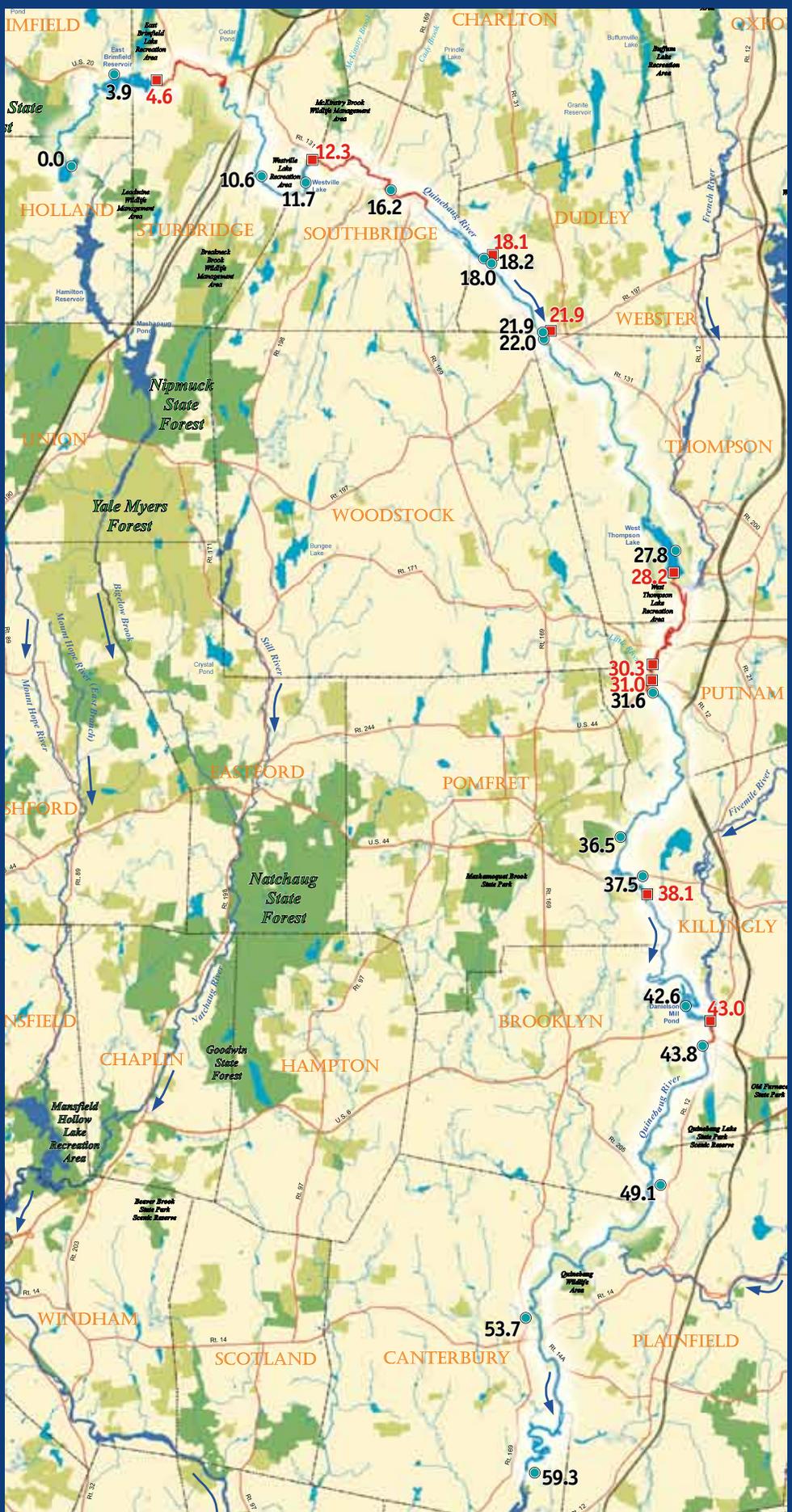




River Miles

Legend

- Thames Basin Boundary
- Town Boundary
- Roads***
 - Interstate Highway
 - U.S. Highway
 - State Highway
 - Highway Connector
- Source to Sea Waterways**
 - River or Stream
 - Lake, Pond, or River
- Other Waterways***
 - River or Stream Direction of River Flow
 - Lake, Pond, or River
 - Wetland (Massachusetts) or Marsh/Swamp (Connecticut)
- Permanently Protected and Other Significant Open Space**
 - State or Federally Owned Open Space
 - Municipal, Privately Owned, or Other Open Space



Overview of the Quinebaug River Water Trail

Seven water trail segments on the Quinebaug provide almost 45 miles of paddling:

- 4.6 miles Holland Pond (Lake Siog) in Holland MA to East Brimfield Lake in Brimfield MA
- 1.7 miles Old Mashapaug Road in Sturbridge MA to Westville Lake in Southbridge MA
- 11.8 miles Dudley River Road in Southbridge MA to West Thompson Lake in Thompson CT
- 6.5 miles Simonzi Park in Putnam CT to Route 101 Bridge in Pomfret CT
- 4.8 miles Brooklyn Riverside Park in Brooklyn CT upriver to Rogers Dam in Pomfret and Killingly CT
- 15.5 miles Wayne R. Lafreniere Memorial Canoe Launch in Killingly CT to Butts Bridge in Canterbury CT

Are You New to Paddling?

If you are a beginner or your group includes youngsters and novices, consider paddling at the following access sites to practice and gain experience where there is no current.

River Mile	Launches for Less-experienced Paddlers
0.0	Holland Pond Canoe Launch
3.9	East Brimfield Lake Boat Ramp
11.7	Westville Lake Boat Ramp
18.0	West Dudley Pond (also known as Paper Mill Pond) Canoe Launch above West Dudley Hydro Dam
27.8	West Thompson Lake Boat Ramp
42.6	Brooklyn Riverside Park Canoe Launch
59.3	Butts Bridge Canoe Launch

On-the-Water Paddle Skills Training

Whether you are new to paddling or have messed about in small boats since you were a kid, there are always new skills to learn for fun and safety. The following groups offer excellent paddling and outdoor safety workshops:

[Appalachian Mountain Club](#)

[Collinsville Canoe & Kayak](#)

[Eastern Mountain Sports Schools](#)

[LL Bean Kayaking Courses](#)





GLOSSARY OF PADDLING TERMS

Boat Ramp: A public launch ramp that is available for power boats as well as canoes and kayaks. See also canoe launch.

Bony: An adjective paddlers use to describe rocky, scratchy conditions due to low water.

Bow and Stern: The front and back ends of a boat, respectively.

Canoe Launch: A less developed public launch site that is suitable for launching canoes and kayaks by hand. See also boat ramp.

Cubic Feet per Second, or "cfs": River flow is measured as the number of cubic feet of water flowing past a certain point each second; it's called cfs for short. River gauges provide online readings updated every 15 minutes, with graphs showing trends.

Eddy: A back-current along the edge of a river. Eddies are a good place to pull off to the side, out of the main current, to rest and re-group, or land. Be careful as you cross into an eddy as your boat may become less stable momentarily.

Flatwater: A section of river with no current, usually due to impounded water behind a dam.

Impoundment: A body of flatwater held behind a dam.

Lee: An adjective, meaning sheltered or away from the wind. By staying close to the lee shore, you'll be exposed to less wind and paddling will be easier.

Painter: A length of rope (known as a line) tied to the bow or stern.

PFD – Personal Flotation Device: The Coast Guard has shifted back to calling them life jackets. No matter the name, they only work if you wear them.

Portage: Derived from French, it means "to carry." A portage is the trail you walk to go around an obstruction (like a dam) or from one water body to another. It's also a verb that means to carry your boat and gear.

Quickwater: Stretches of river with enough current to carry the boat and create ripples, but not as steep or rough as rapids. Generally, you can navigate quickwater by following the main current. Also known as Class I whitewater (see below).

River Left and River Right: Refers to the river as you face downstream. As in, "Watch for the big rock on river left."

Rock Garden: A section of river with many partially submerged rocks. It's usually applied to areas with swift current where strong paddling skills are needed to dodge rocks.

Strainer: A fallen tree, partially submerged in the current, so the limbs and branches "strain" the water. People and boats pushed by current into a strainer put themselves and rescuers in extreme danger!

Sweep: An experienced paddler who remains the last boat in a group. He or she makes sure nobody is left behind and is ready to help with rescues.

USGS: Stands for the US Geological Survey. This agency and the US Army Corps of Engineers maintain a network of river gauges (sometimes spelled gages) to register water level and flow data online every 15 minutes. These readings are useful to decide whether the river flow is too low, too high or just right for your skills and equipment.

Whitewater: Stretches of river with enough flow and rocks to create breaking waves of water. On the standardized scale from I to V of whitewater difficulty, the Quinebaug has Class I (also called quickwater) and a few Class II spots at higher water levels.

(Adapted from www.American-Whitewater.org)

Class I: Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. There are few obstructions, all obvious and easily avoided with little training.

Class II: Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium-sized waves are easily avoided by trained paddlers.

HOW TO FIND LOCATIONS & CALCULATE DISTANCE

River Mile

To describe locations and relative distances on the river, the guide identifies every point by River Mile, beginning with 0.0 at Holland Pond Canoe Launch in Holland MA and ending with 59.3 at Butts Bridge in Canterbury CT.

Street Address

Because there are rarely structures with specific addresses at launch sites, street addresses are often approximate and derived from Google® Maps.

Latitude & Longitude

Called lat/long for short, these decimal coordinates are precise and function well on sites like Google® Maps, Google® Earth and Bing®. Copy the coordinates into the search window of Google® or a mapping website

(yes, the first is a positive number and the second is negative) and it will display that location. Note: in this Paddle Guide we use decimal lat/longs. Coordinates can also be expressed in minutes and seconds, but that format doesn't work as well with online mapping sites.

Google® Earth

On The Last Green Valley website, you will find a link to detailed data and an interactive map for the Quinebaug River Water Trail at <http://www.tlgv.org/preserve/watershedprojects/water-trail-earth-map.html>. This map was created in Google Earth, a free online mapping program. You do not need to download Google Earth software to use this link, but to view more

advanced features, such as a fly-over of the Quinebaug River, you may wish to download Google Earth from this link: <http://www.google.com/earth/index.html>.

Internet Address Links

Website addresses are embedded in Paddle Guide text wherever you see a word or phrase in blue and underlined. When viewing the Paddle Guide on a computer connected to the internet, you can go to a website by holding down the Control key and clicking on the word or phrase. If you are reading a paper copy, use the spelled-out listing of every website address in the Appendix to enter addresses manually.

Before You Go

Think ahead and prepare for a safe trip. A safe paddle outing begins before you leave home. It's up to you to make good decisions for yourself and your group. Learn how from the American Canoe Association. Also, check out the American Whitewater Safety Code.

Life Jacket!

Just wear it! Smart paddlers wear life jackets at all times. Connecticut state law requires that every person wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket between October 1st and May 31st. From June 1st through September 30th, there must be a life jacket aboard for each person. See the Connecticut Boater's Guide for full information.

Massachusetts law requires all canoe and kayak paddlers to wear a Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, or III life jacket between September 15 and May 15. Like Connecticut, outside this time period, an approved life jacket for every person must be in the boat. See the Massachusetts Boater Safety Handbook.

"In Massachusetts over the last 10 years, 85% of the victims who died in boating accidents did not use life jackets. The majority of these victims fell overboard or capsized and then drowned. Many of these deaths undoubtedly would have been prevented if a life jacket had been worn."

MA Environmental Police

Use Stream Gauges to Judge Paddling Conditions Before You Go

Water levels rise and fall with rainfall, snowmelt and dam releases, sometimes dramatically. Please pay attention to changing conditions before and during every trip.

In the paddling conditions descriptions below, we suggest minimum thresholds for water flow so you don't end up walking more than paddling. Note that we intentionally do not recommend maximum levels because your safety depends entirely on your skill, equipment and judgment. This is true at any flow; what's safe and easy for a skilled paddler may be life-threatening to a less experienced paddler.

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Preparation Checklist

- Attach a whistle to each life jacket so paddlers can signal for help in an emergency.
- Bring a USGS map to track your progress and to find a road or assistance, if necessary.
- Bring an extra paddle for each boat, water bottles, food or energy snacks, hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and bug spray.
- Have a line (known as a painter) attached to the bow and stern of each boat.
- Hypothermia is a real threat, even on beautiful warm days, especially in the spring when river levels are often good for paddling but the water is still freezing. Dress for cold water and be prepared to spot the signs of hypothermia, including bad judgment by fellow paddlers. Take a complete change of dry clothes in a dry bag.
- Let friends or family know where you will put in and take out and when to expect your return.
- Take a cell phone in a waterproof bag for emergency calls (though you may not always be able to get a signal).
- Be sure everyone's paddling skills are up to the demands of the segment you wish to paddle. When in doubt, don't go out.
- Clean your boats when you travel between rivers or watersheds. You don't want to transport Didymo (also called rock snot) and invasive plants to choke your favorite paddling spots.
- Position the most experienced paddlers so they lead the way and bring up the rear. The leader out front watches for hazards and gives directions; the last paddler (known as the sweep) makes sure nobody is left behind.

Before heading out, check the USGS online stream gauges. They measure both the river level and volume of water passing by every 15 minutes, 24/7. The sites also display recent trends and historic averages.

[River Mile 4.8 - Below East Brimfield Dam](#)

[River Mile 12.5 - Below Westville Dam](#)

[River Mile 20.6 - at Route 197 Bridge, Quinebaug](#)

[River Mile 28.5 - Below West Thompson Dam](#)

[River Mile 31.4 - Below Cargill Falls, Putnam](#)

[Google® Earth Display of Every Stream Gauge by State, Region or Nationwide](#)

Note that you must download free software to use Google® Earth.

[Google® Map of Every Stream Gauge by State, Region or Nationwide](#)

This is available without a software download.

Let's Take Care of the River We Enjoy

As people enter and leave the water, launch sites tend to erode. As the footing gets muddy, the erosion gets worse and silt pollutes the river. To break this cycle, local officials and volunteers are lining up funding, materials and volunteers to stabilize launches. Email The Last Green Valley to receive monthly updates of upcoming water trail outings and clean-up events.

In the meantime, do your part right away:

- Carry out everything you carry in.
- Take an extra grocery bag to stash trash you find along the way.
- On a water trail, make every day a clean-up day.

Volunteer to Help Manage the Water Trail

Volunteers are the heartbeat of this trail. They prepare and update Paddle Guides and they help develop and maintain launches and kiosks. We need volunteers to help with occasional events and on-going projects. Email The Last Green Valley or call 860-774-3300 to add your name to the volunteer list. We'll contact you when there is work to do. Plus, join us for water trail outings to enjoy the river and meet other paddlers.

Join The Last Green Valley

The Last Green Valley is two things: it is the popular name given to the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor (designated by Congress in 1994) and it is the name of the nonprofit organization which manages the National Heritage Corridor. The Last Green Valley, Inc. works to enhance the region's significant natural resources in the context of a vital economy and regional cultural identity.

By joining The Last Green Valley, you will support a local, sustainable economy. It is a member-supported nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. In partnership with watershed groups, paddlers, local, state and federal agencies, TLGV aims to create a water trail network on all navigable rivers that flow to the Thames.

Calendar of Events

To see upcoming events on and about the rivers in the heritage corridor, please visit the The Last Green Valley Calendar.



Quinebaug River Water Trail Paddle Guide

River Mile 0.0 Holland MA

Canoe Launch: Holland Pond - also known as Lake Siog (river right)
Pond-Bridge Road, Holland MA 01521
 Lat/Long: 42.082236°, -72.163644°



Driving Directions

From Brimfield Center, drive east for a quarter-mile on Route 20, then turn south onto Holland Road. Follow this for two miles (the name changes to Brimfield Road about halfway there) then turn left onto Pond-Bridge Road. The put-in is a quarter-mile on the left, on the far side of a small bridge.

Please be aware that Pond-Bridge Road is closed to traffic when the reservoir behind East Brimfield Dam rises above 16 feet following very heavy rains or snowmelt. Call the Corps of Engineers during weekday business hours to confirm status of the road: 508-347-3705.

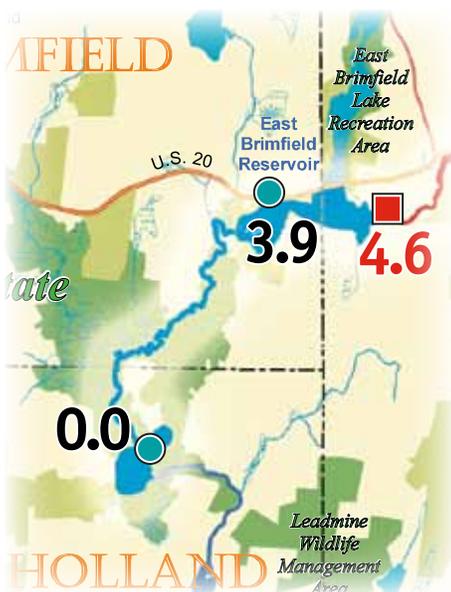
To see the current reservoir level readings online for US Army Corps of Engineers projects:

1. Go to [Reservoir Control](#). You may need to click "Display Blocked Content" to open the website.
2. On the map of New England river basins regulated by the Corps, click anywhere in Thames Basin to enlarge that portion of the map. You'll see colored triangles (for reservoirs) and circles (for river gauges).
3. Click on the triangle labeled "EBD" to display a table of data for East Brimfield Dam.
4. If the first line under Pool is 16 feet or above – or headed in that direction – then the road is probably closed. Call to 508-347-3705 to confirm.

Parking & Access to the River

There are a dozen free parking spaces in the unpaved parking lot at the put-in and more in an adjacent lot. The carry to the water's edge is less than 50 feet. The put-in is a low bank with a grassy shoreline and some stones.

There are no rest rooms at the put-in. They are available at the beach across Lake Siog from June until Labor Day. You can drive into the beach on Friday through Sunday.





Description

This segment is within the East Brimfield Lake Project of the US Army Corps of Engineers and is called the Quinebaug River Canoe Trail. It was the first water trail designated by the Department of Interior as a National Recreation Trail and Watchable Wildlife Area. Download an excellent [two-page guide and map](#).

Note: Don't let the names confuse you. The Corps named this segment the Quinebaug River Canoe Trail. The whole river is known as the Quinebaug River Water Trail.

Paddling Downstream to East Brimfield Lake Boat Ramp

This segment is 3.9 miles long with little current, extensive wildlife habitat, three picnic landings and no portages. It is an excellent three-hour outing for beginning paddlers and families.

Because current is not an issue, you can paddle downstream to East Brimfield Lake Boat Ramp and back, or stop there, depending on the weather, your time and stamina. Paddle conditions are best when flow is more than 50 cubic feet per second (or cfs), as measured by the on-line USGS Streamgage at East Brimfield. Below 20 to 30 cfs, it will be a scratchy and weedy ride.

There are three designated rest stops along the route for picnicking and relaxation. Fires and camping are prohibited, but fishing is permitted throughout with a Massachusetts fishing license. For most of this trip, the river moves very slowly through meanders and is surrounded by extensive marshes. Once you enter the open water of East Brimfield Lake, stronger winds can be a factor.

Wildlife and beautiful scenery are plentiful. Watch for turtles, Great Blue Herons, Canada Geese, various ducks, red fox, hawks, turkeys and many songbirds. You may spot Bald Eagles during late winter and early spring.

River Mile 3.9

Fiskdale MA

Boat Ramp: East Brimfield Lake (river left)

Across from 366-398 Sturbridge Road, Fiskdale MA 01581

Lat/Long: 42.110269°, -72.139380°

Driving Directions

From Route 20 near the Brimfield/Sturbridge town line, turn into the launch across the street from Green Thumb Nursery, on the south side of the road. There is a sign.



Parking & Access to the River

There are more than a dozen spaces in the paved lot and the carry to the water's edge is less than 50 feet. Access to the water includes a paved launch ramp and a low grassy slope into the water. This ramp area is open from early April to late November. There are no public restrooms; however, you will find portables year-round at the boat ramp north of Route 20, half a mile to the east.



Paddling Conditions on East Brimfield Lake

Because current is not an issue on this segment, you can paddle upstream to Holland Pond, downstream, or both, depending on the weather, your time and stamina. See the description above for more about paddling conditions upriver. It is .7 of a mile down the lake to the barrier above the dam. There is no hand-carry portage around it. There is plenty of fishing and paddling to do around the lake. Keep an eye on the wind as conditions can change dramatically.

Vehicular Portage: Drive from East Brimfield Boat Ramp (River Mile 3.9) to Old Mashapaug Road in Sturbridge (River Mile 10.6) 7.6 miles by road

Drive east on Route 20, just past the entrance to Old Sturbridge Village; turn south on Old Sturbridge Village Road. Follow it to the bridge over I-84, where it becomes River Road. Continue on River Road to the four-way intersection with Mashapaug Road; turn left. Drive 1.1 miles, turn left onto Breakneck Road. In 1/3 of a mile, Breakneck bears left at a small traffic island. Cross the river and turn left onto Old Mashapaug Road. (You will pass the entrance to Westville Dam Boat Ramp on your right.) This gated Corps of Engineers road is open from mid-April until the second Sunday in September, generally from 8 to 8 each day. It's .75 mile upriver to the canoe launch.

River Mile 4.6

No Water Trail between East Brimfield Dam (River Mile 4.6) and Old Mashapaug Road (River Mile 10.6)

In late April, when there is plenty of water, the Sturbridge Lions Club sponsors the All-American River Race from Turner's Field (River Mile 5.8) to Westville Lake Boat Ramp (River Mile 11.7). Because there are no authorized public launches and portages on this segment, it is not yet part of the Quinebaug River Water Trail. Plus, water levels are too low to paddle for much of the summer and fall.

East Brimfield Dam – DANGER – Do Not Paddle!

Lat/Long: 42.108093°, -72.126962°



River Mile 10.6

Sturbridge MA



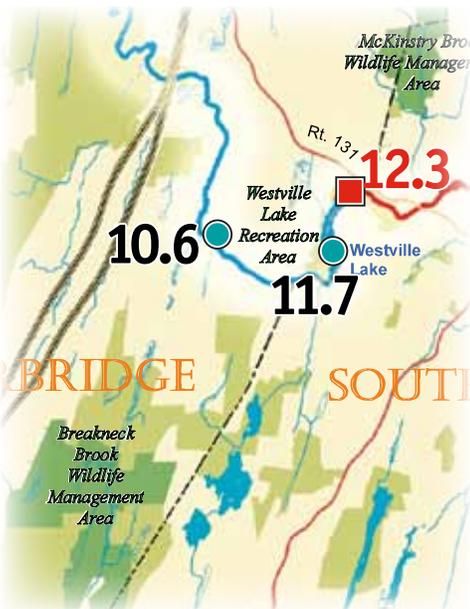
Canoe Launch: Old Mashapaug Road
also known as Old Box Shop Dam (river right)
3 Old Mashapaug Road, Sturbridge MA 01566
Lat/Long: 42.074933°, -72.077203°

Driving Directions

From Route 20, drive south on Old Sturbridge Village Road. Follow it to the bridge over I-84, where it becomes River Road. Continue on River Road to the four-way intersection with Mashapaug Road; turn left. Drive 1.1 miles, turn left onto Breakneck Road. In 1/3 of a mile, Breakneck bears left at a small traffic island and becomes Wallace Road. Cross the river and turn left onto Old Mashapaug Road, a gated Corps of Engineers road. (You will pass the entrance to Westville Dam Boat Ramp on your right.) This old road is open from mid-April until the second Sunday in September, generally from 8 to 8 each day. It's .75 mile upriver to the canoe launch.

Parking & Access to the River

The unpaved lot will accommodate a dozen cars. The carry to the water's edge is about 50 feet and the access to the water is gently sloping. There are no restrooms.



Paddling Upstream to Old Sturbridge Village Dam (River Mile 7.3)

You can paddle upstream for 3.3 miles to Old Sturbridge Village Dam where you will have to turn around because there is no authorized portage. This section is mostly flat water and friendly to novice paddlers. At less than 50 cubic feet per second (cfs) of flow, it's more walking than paddling, so check the real-time level at USGS Streamgauge at East Brimfield. Note that the 2011 tornado ripped across the river just south of Old Sturbridge Village and there may still be a lot of strainers and other debris in the river.

Paddling Downstream to Westville Lake Recreation Area (River Mile 11.7)

The first .75 mile drops about 25 feet beginning at the low-head dam right at the put-in. In high water, this is a Class II rapid; in low water, it is a rock field. When the USGS Streamgauge at East Brimfield shows 300 cfs or more, the rocks are covered by water.

Given how tricky this stretch can be just downstream, you may want to launch at Westville Lake to paddle the lake and as far upstream as you find comfortable. Visit the [Corps of Engineers website](#) for more information about the Westville Dam Recreation Area.

River Mile 11.7

Sturbridge MA

Boat Ramp: Westville Lake Recreation Area (river left)
46 Shepard Road, Sturbridge MA 01566
Lat/Long: 42.073603°, -72.060178°

Driving Directions

Westville Lake is located in Southbridge and Sturbridge MA. From I-84 westbound take Exit 3B to Route 20 West, on to Route 131 East. Follow the signs to Recreation Area entrance. From Connecticut and I-84



eastbound take Exit 1 to Mashapaug Road. Follow the signs to the Dam and Recreation Area.

Parking & Access to the River

There are more than a hundred parking spaces here, but remember that the athletic fields are sometimes used for softball and soccer leagues. There is a walking trail around the reservoir. The park is open for vehicles and the bathrooms are open from mid-May until the second Sunday in September, seven days a week from 8 to 8. There is a water fountain. Visit the [Corps of Engineers website](#) for more information about the Westville Dam Recreation Area.



Paddling Conditions

The reservoir behind the dam provides a reliable place to paddle regardless of stream flow levels.

From the launch area, you can paddle the lake upstream as far as you find comfortable and downstream to the dam (.6 of a mile). There is no portage at this dam. Beginning at the dam, the river is unsuitable for paddling through Southbridge for 3.9 miles due to hazardous conditions.

River Mile 12.3

River Mile 12.3 to River Mile 16.2

No Water Trail from Westville Dam through Southbridge

This section is dangerous and unpleasant for paddlers at any level of water flow. The river is channelized between vertical concrete walls through the Town of Southbridge.

You must portage by car to the next put-in at Dudley River Road (River Mile 16.2) or West Dudley Hydro (Paper Mill) Dam (River Mile 18.0).

Westville Dam – DANGER – Do Not Paddle!

Lat/Long: 42.081199°, -72.059265°



Vehicular Portage: Drive from Westville Lake Boat Ramp (River Mile 11.7) to Dudley River Road Launch in Dudley (River Mile 16.2)

3.8 miles by road

Exit the parking lot and turn left onto Wallace Road, cross the bridge and bear left onto Old South Street. At .7 mile, turn left onto South Street and follow it for 1.1 mile to the junction with Main Street (Route 131) in downtown Southbridge. Bear right and continue on 131 south to the Big Y Marketplace (it will become East Main Street along the way) for 1.9 mile. As Route 131 bends to the right just south of the Big Y, turn left onto the bridge to Dudley River Road. Cross the bridge and turn right. The launch site is immediately on your right, just downstream of the bridge.

River Mile 16.2 Dudley MA



Canoe Launch: Dudley River Road (river left)

2 Dudley River Road, Dudley MA 01571

Lat/Long: 42.066953°, -72.007569°

Driving Directions

At the bend in Route 131 just south of the Big Y, turn east onto the bridge to Dudley River Road. Cross the bridge and turn right. The launch site is immediately on your right, just downstream of the bridge.

Parking & Access to the River

There are No Parking signs on both sides of the road except for an area that will accommodate two to three cars. This land is owned by the Town of Southbridge, but is not yet a formal launch site. Paddlers must improvise a trail down a very steep bank through brush and poison ivy.

Vehicular Portage Option:

Drive from Dudley River Road (River Mile 16.2) to West Dudley Hydro Dam (River Mile 18.0) 2.2 miles by road Return to Route 131 south and follow it for 2.1 miles. Turn left onto West Dudley Road for .15 mile where you will find a parking area and kiosk on the portage around the West Dudley Hydro Dam.



This is especially difficult in wet weather. At the bottom of the slope, the flood plain can accommodate several boats when the river is low. At high water, there is not much room to maneuver.

Less experienced paddlers should skip this section and drive to the launch above West Dudley Hydro Dam (River Mile 18.0) instead.

Paddling to West Dudley Hydro Dam

At high water, this is a challenging stretch, best suited for experienced paddlers who can enter their boats under difficult conditions and handle swift current. It is 1.9 miles to the take-out above West Dudley Hydro Dam (River Mile 18.0). During low water in summer and fall, this section is not navigable. If the USGS stream gauge at Route 197 Bridge, Quinebaug reads lower than 200 cfs, you may want to paddle another day, after some rain.

River Mile 18.0 Dudley MA



Canoe Launch: Above West Dudley Hydro Dam at West Dudley Pond – also known as Paper Mill Pond and Paper Mill Dam (river right)

11-37 West Dudley Road, Dudley MA 01571

Lat/Long: 42.050087°, -71.982596°

Driving Directions

From Southbridge Road (Route 131), turn onto West Dudley Road. Continue .15 mile, between Industrial Transfer & Storage Company and the closed bridge, where the Quinebaug River Valley Trail crosses the road.

Parking & Access to the River Upstream

An eight-car parking and kiosk area is part of the rail and water trail corridor. The West Dudley Pond launch is adjacent to the parking area. There is vehicular access and a turn-around to drop off your boat and gear.



Paddling above West Dudley Hydro Dam

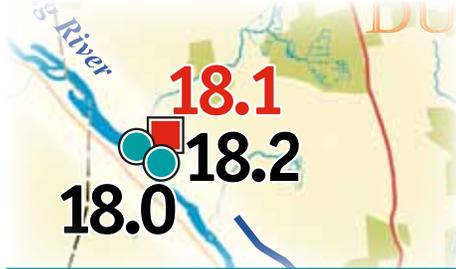
The impounded river behind the dam provides a pleasant stretch of river with current and plenty of water even in dry conditions. Paddle around the pond, or upstream until either current or scratchy rocks convince you to turn back. West Dudley Pond is an ideal place for family outings and novice paddlers. Keep an eye on the wind as the open water is about .75 mile long and 400 feet wide.



West Dudley Hydro Dam – DANGER – Do Not Paddle!

Lat/Long: 42.050552°, -71.981568°

River Mile 18.1

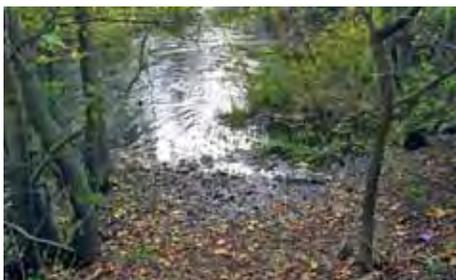
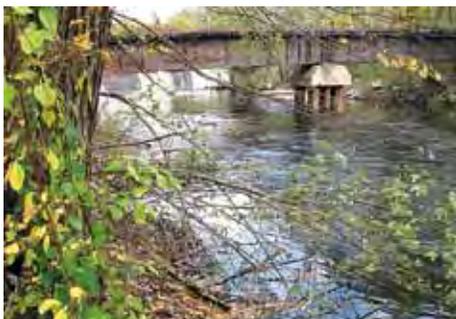


Portage: Carry around West Dudley Hydro Dam (river right) 400-foot carry by hand, with one road crossing (West Dudley Road will be a dead-end road until the bridge is replaced.)



With the development of the Quinebaug Valley Rail Trail, the portage will follow the trail to, and across, West Dudley Road. The portage route then bears right and down the embankment to the downstream launch. During and after rail trail construction, the launch site may be relocated, so watch for changes.

River Mile 18.2 Dudley MA



Canoe Launch: Below West Dudley Hydro Dam at West Dudley Pond – also known as Paper Mill Pond and Paper Mill Dam (river right)

11-37 West Dudley Road, Dudley MA 01571

Lat/Long: 42.049600°, -71.981433°

Driving Directions

From Southbridge Road (Route 131), turn onto West Dudley Road. Continue .15 mile, between Industrial Transfer & Storage Company and the closed bridge, where the Quinebaug River Valley Trail crosses the road.

Parking & Access to the River

An eight-car parking area with information kiosk serves this convergence of rail and water trails. The launch is downstream of the rail trail bridge, on river right. You can unload your boat and gear near the put-in then park in the lot. The carry to the water is less than 100 feet.

Paddling to Fabyan Dam

This section includes quickwater, river turns with Class I whitewater, small islands with narrow channels and fallen trees cut down by beaver. Less experienced paddlers should skip this section, especially at higher flows. Check the [USGS Streamgauge](#) at Westville Dam. At low flows, as long as you have at least 200 cfs (2.7-feet on the stream gauge reading), you should have enough water to paddle.

Before you put in, beware of turbulence from water released from the dam to run the powerhouse; it is automated and unpredictable. It may get boney in the half-mile Rock Garden sections between MA 131 (Old Turnpike Road) and CT 197 at the state line. You will float comfortably again once you pass under 197. The paddle to Fabyan will take up to two hours depending on flow and your group.

Be careful as you approach Fabyan Dam which is unsafe to shoot. Hug the shore on river left and enter the marked channel for the take-out/portage.

River Mile 21.9

Fabyan Dam – DANGER – Do Not Paddle!

Lat/Long: 42.010425°, -71.942169°



The breach in the dam on river left is too steep and rocky to shoot safely. The remains of the dam create sharp snags that you cannot see.

River Mile 21.9

Thompson CT



Take-out & Portage: Above Fabyan Dam (river left)

622 Fabyan Road, Thompson CT 06255

Lat/Long: 42.010593°, -71.942139°

Driving Directions

From the intersection with CT Route 131, the launch is .6 mile south on Fabyan Woodstock Road, on the left just before the bridge. Watch for the brown sign: Fabyan Dam Canoe Launch.

Parking & Access to the River

The take-out is on river left. Be careful unloading as the breach is just downstream. There is an unpaved parking area with lots of room on the north side of Fabyan Road, a carry of about 200 feet.

Portage: Carry around Fabyan Dam (river left)

400-foot carry by hand, with road crossing

For those continuing on downstream, be extra careful portaging across Fabyan Road as vehicles fly through, oblivious to slow-moving portagers. Always have a spotter give the All Clear before carrying boats across!

River Mile: 22.0

Thompson CT



Canoe Launch: Fabyan (river left)

622 Fabyan Road, Thompson CT 06255

Lat/Long: 42.009886°, -71.941597°

Driving Directions

From the intersection with CT Route 131, the launch is .6 mile south on Fabyan Woodstock Road, on the left just before the bridge. Watch for the brown sign: Fabyan Dam Canoe Launch.

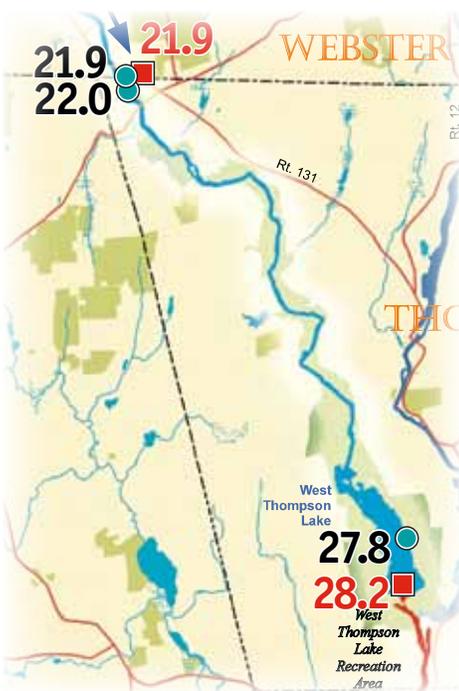
Parking & Access to the River

There are six free parking spaces in a paved lot (and additional spaces across Fabyan Road in an unpaved lot). There are no public restrooms. The carry to the water is 175 feet. You can back your vehicle down the paved ramp to unload if necessary. The put-in is gently sloping with room for several boats to launch at a time.

In addition to the launch for canoes and kayaks, the 7.5 mile Quinebaug River Hiking Trail starts here and runs along the river to West Thompson Lake.

History of the Site

Before you put in at Fabyan, notice the remnants of the dam just upstream of the bridge. It was built in 1804 to power a carding and felting machine at the mill on site. Between 1821 and 1870, steel axes and tools and woolen goods were produced here. The Fabyan Mill was severely damaged by the 1938 hurricane and never recovered. In March 1939, a fire destroyed the mill completely.



Paddling to West Thompson Dam

This segment is within the West Thompson Lake project of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps [website](#) includes an excellent water trail guide and map. This segment is 5.8 miles long with some moving water (but no rapids), some flat water, extensive wildlife habitat and no portages. It is an excellent three-hour outing for paddlers who are comfortable with moving water.

Paddling is not suggested during high-water events after snowmelt and heavy storms. To check on water levels and stream flow, go to the West Thompson Lake Dam website and click on [West Thompson Lake Real Time Water Levels](#). Check the column called Inflow. If you have at least 225 cfs, you'll have a pleasant ride; below that level, you'll scrape or have to walk when it gets really low. If you have questions about paddling conditions, please contact the Park Office at 860-923-2982. You can also check the [USGS Streamgage](#) at Route 197 Bridge, Quinebaug for this information.

The banks range from steep and forested to flat, agricultural fields. Especially during the first three miles, you will feel isolated, except for two bridge crossings. The first bridge is Brickyard Road, about two miles downstream. About one mile farther down is Red Bridge Road. The river begins to widen as you paddle between corn fields. You will pass by stone bridge abutments where the Old Blain Road pedestrian bridge used to be; this marks the beginning of West Thompson Lake, the impoundment behind the dam. You'll reach the Boat Ramp about one mile downstream on the left. With no current to help you along, and possibly a headwind, this may feel like the longest mile of your trip.

Wildlife and beautiful scenery are plentiful. Watch for turtles, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Canada Geese, various ducks, hawks, osprey, turkeys and many songbirds. You may see beaver, deer and red fox, too. Bald Eagles pass through in the late winter and early spring. The Quinebaug River is stocked with brook, brown and rainbow trout. There is also a healthy population of small-mouth bass throughout the river.



River Mile 27.8

North Grosvenor Dale CT



Boat Ramp: West Thompson Lake (river left)

341-365 Reardon Road, North Grosvenor Dale CT 06255

Lat/Long: 41.953556°, -71.899741°

Driving Directions

From CT 12, go west on West Thompson Road then turn right onto Reardon Road. Turn left onto the West Thompson Lake Recreation Road and follow it to the water.

Parking & Access to the River

There are about 30 free parking spaces at the West Thompson Lake Boat Ramp which serves power boats as well as paddle craft. You can drive down to the water to load and unload boats. Access to the water includes a broad paved launch ramp and a grassy slope into the water with sandy bottom. Portable restrooms are available from mid-May to Columbus Day.

This 200-acre lake is managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers for recreation and flood control. The West Thompson Lake [website](#) includes an excellent guide and map.

Paddling on West Thompson Lake

You can paddle around the lake, fish (with a Connecticut license) and venture upstream to the north end where the Quinebaug River enters. At the south end of the lake, please stay away from the inlet of the dam. There is no hand-carry portage downstream around the dam.

Winds are changeable and can make paddling difficult on this large lake, especially for inexperienced and young paddlers. Keep an eye on the weather and stick to the lee shore.

The normal pool level (or "stage") of the lake is 15 feet. To check it out online, go to West Thompson Lake Dam and click on [Real Time Water Levels](#). Look under the column called Pool. If you have questions about paddling conditions, please contact the Park Office at 860-923-2982.

About the Recreation Area

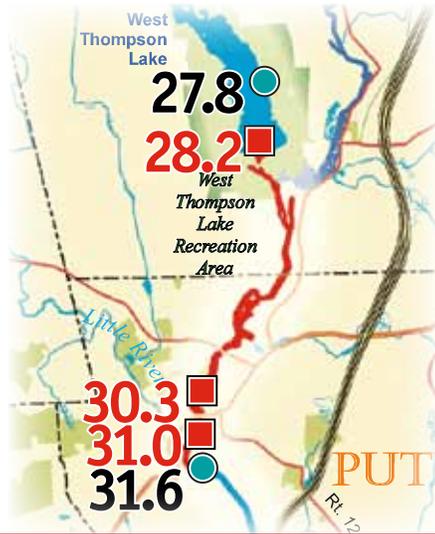
After the devastating floods of 1955, the federal government planned flood control projects to prevent future disasters. The US Army Corps of Engineers acquired land through eminent domain. West Thompson Dam is part of a network of six flood control facilities in the Thames River Basin which help to control flooding all the way from the upstream tributaries of the Thames River to the Long Island Sound. Construction of the dam created multiple recreational opportunities. The natural setting surrounding West Thompson Lake is enjoyed year-round by hikers, picnickers, campers, photographers and other visitors.

The West Thompson Lake Campground is open from the third Friday in May through the Sunday after Labor Day. There are 24 sites, including 11 with water and electricity, 11 basic sites, and two Adirondack-style lean-to-shelters. There are restrooms with hot showers, firewood for purchase, a playground, horseshoe pits, a half-court basketball court, amphitheater with small stage and an RV dump station. For reservations, call 877-444-6777 or go to www.recreation.gov.



Three picnic shelters and several group use areas may be reserved for a fee, on a first-come, first-served basis. Group activities such as bass tournaments, field dog trials and Scout group campouts require a special-use permit. An 18-hole disc golf course is available for use by the public free of charge. West Thompson also offers over 17 miles of hiking trails throughout its 1,857 acres.

River Mile 28.2



West Thompson Lake Dam – DANGER – Do Not Paddle!

Lat/Long: 41.946641°, -71.901354°

You can drive the length of this dam on West Thompson Road, but you cannot hand carry a boat around it. Portage by car to Simonzi Park.



Vehicular Portage: Drive from West Thompson Lake Boat Ramp (River Mile 27.8) to Simonzi Park in Putnam (River Mile 31.6)

4.5 miles by road

Follow West Thompson Lake Recreation Road for .4 mile, turn right onto Reardon Road. Follow Reardon for half a mile, turn left onto West Thompson Road (Route 193) and continue .25 mile to intersection with Route 12. Turn right onto 12 (it's called Riverside Drive) and follow it for 1.9 miles to the junction with Route 44. Turn right and follow 44 through downtown Putnam for .8 mile. Turn left onto Kennedy Drive at intersection just before the bridge at Cargill Falls. Follow Kennedy Drive along the river for half a mile, then turn right into the Simonzi Park parking lot.

River Mile 30.3

Belding Mill Dam – DANGER – Do Not Paddle!

Lat/Long: 41.923316°, -71.906378°

There is no portage around this dam.



River Mile 31.0

Cargill Falls – DANGER – Do Not Paddle!

Lat/Long: 41.915951°, -71.911440°

There is no portage around this dam and falls.



River Mile 31.6

Putnam CT



Canoe Launch: Simonzi Park (river left)

80-82 Kennedy Drive, Putnam, CT 06260

Lat/Long: 41.908536°, -71.909695°

Driving Directions

From Route 395: Take exit 95 for Kennedy Drive toward Putnam. Head west for .9 mile to the paved parking area on the left across from Canal Street.

From Route 44: turn south on Kennedy Drive in Putnam and head .5 mile to the paved parking area on the right across from Canal Street.

Parking & Access to the River

There are about a dozen free parking spaces. The carry to the water's edge is about 100 feet and gently sloped. The shoreline is a grassy bank with a one- to two-foot drop to the water; this can be tricky, depending on the water level. In 2011, the Town installed a set of pre-cast concrete steps (with a railing) and graded the slope at the put-in. The Town provides a portable restroom. Thanks to Wheelabrator Putnam for funding the installation of a water trail informational kiosk.

Paddling to Route 101 in Pomfret

The trip to Route 101 is 5.9 miles long with current, some quick-water and flat-water, but no portages. It is an excellent two-hour outing for paddlers who are comfortable with moving water. This section holds water well and may be navigable when other sections are too low. Beginners will enjoy this stretch with moderate flow of 300 to 600 cfs on the [USGS Streamgage](#) at Cargill Falls, Putnam. At high flows the current is strong and spans the river. The riverbed slopes gently and there aren't many big rocks, so there are few eddies or waves. In dry conditions, with flows lower than 200 cfs, you may walk more than paddle. You may want to wait until after the next rainy day.

If you launch from Putnam with moderate and higher flows, be ready for a stretch of quickwater right away. With good flows, the current will do a lot of the work almost all the way to Cotton Bridge, but you will need to watch for turbulence and strainers (partially submerged trees and branches).

The first mile and a half parallels Kennedy Drive and Interstate 395, but even with cars and trucks in sight, it's surprisingly quiet and peaceful. There are few houses and businesses once you paddle away from 395. Don't be alarmed if you hear gunfire from a neighboring sportsman's club shooting range. The river flows between wooded banks that screen your view of agricultural fields and several gravel operations, so you'll hardly notice them. This is pleasant and beautiful paddling.

At River Mile 35.9, watch on river right for a small man-made inlet and a monolithic curiosity left over from a never-completed hydro dam: a free-standing stone wall with three round holes, each about 12 feet in diameter.

Farther along, you may catch sight of an abandoned cabin along the way. On the river bottom, look for remnants of Native American fish weirs, visible as cobbles arranged on the river bottom. Historians have documented weirs in Killingly and downriver.

River Mile 36.5

Pomfret CT



Canoe Launch: Cotton Bridge Road (river right)

107 Cotton Bridge Road, Pomfret CT 06259

Lat/Long: 41.858608°, -71.924741°

Parking & Access to the River

There is a gravelly parking area between the road and river which accommodates about four cars, but there are no other facilities here.

Paddling to Route 101

A mile past Cotton Bridge Road, you will reach the take-out at Route 101 on river right, just past the bridge as the river bends to the right. The shoreline is moderately steep and constructed of railroad tie steps. If the flow is strong you may want to pull into the tiny cove about ten feet downstream of the canoe launch steps. The first paddlers to land should help later arrivals to come ashore.

It is a good idea to get off the river at Route 101 because .6 mile downstream is the Rogers Dam, a dangerous drop with no formal portage, though some people walk around on river right. Someday, there may be a public portage; for now, you should drive to Brooklyn Riverside Park and paddle upstream to enjoy the river below Rogers Dam.

River Mile 37.5

Pomfret CT



Canoe Launch: At Route 101 Bridge (river right)

437 Killingly Road, Pomfret CT 06259

Lat/Long: 41.849063°, -71.921325°

Driving Directions

From Route 395: Take exit 93, Route 101. Head west on Route 101 for 2.2 miles, cross the Quinebaug River and turn left at the brown boat launch sign.
From the west: The launch is on Route 101, about 2.1 miles east of the Route 101 and Route 169 intersection. Turn right at the brown boat launch sign.

Parking & Access to the River

This is a popular take-out for the 5.9-mile paddle from Putnam with about a dozen free parking spaces in an unpaved lot. Northeast Utilities/Connecticut Light & Power owns the site and has authorized the Pomfret Conservation Commission to make improvements for paddlers and anglers. The Last Green Valley funded an informational kiosk. There are no public restrooms. The carry from the water's edge is about 100 feet.

Paddling Downstream

Paddling downstream from this launch is not advisable until a formal portage can be created around the Rogers Dam, .6 mile downstream. The dam is a dangerous drop and is hazardous under any conditions. Some paddlers do walk around on river right.

River Mile 38.1



Rogers Dam – DANGER – Do Not Paddle!

Lat/Long: 41.841585°, -71.914808°



Paddling in this area is not advisable until a formal portage can be created around the Rogers Dam. The dam is a dangerous drop of more than 10 feet and is hazardous under any conditions. Some paddlers do portage on river right. You can also paddle upstream from Brooklyn to enjoy the river below the dam. See below.

River Mile 42.6 Brooklyn CT



Canoe Launch: Brooklyn Riverside Park (river right)

18 Day Street, Brooklyn CT 06234

Lat/Long: 41.802682°, -71.896252°

Driving Directions

From Route 6, turn north at the traffic signal onto Day Street. There is a Citgo gas station and convenience store at the intersection. Drive 300 feet, then turn right at the signs for "Quinebaug River Canoe Trail" and Riverbend Apartments. Drive down the hill approximately 400 feet and bear left at the apartments. Turn right at the bottom of the hill into the parking lot.

Parking & Access to the River

River access is at the end of the parking lot on the left.



Site Description

The Town Of Brooklyn Riverside Park Canoe Launch is very user friendly. Both novice and experienced paddlers can enjoy several hours here. The site is easy to find, has good parking, and can be used almost all year. It is a good place for fishing and a picnic although there are no restroom facilities. Paddlers can travel three to four miles upstream and then return back downstream to the launch site.

The ramp is constructed of two-inch angular stone and is about 10 feet wide. At the bottom of the stone ramp there are several three by three-foot concrete slabs resting on the river bottom. Adjacent steeper slopes are cleared of underbrush and covered with wood chips to create river views.

This is intended to be a hand launch ramp; a locked cable prevents vehicular access. Nevertheless, be aware that small motorized boats do travel on this portion of the Quinebaug.

The area in between the parking lot and the river has nice views of the river and is shady. It is a good place for a picnic although there are no picnic tables at this time. There are no portable restrooms at this time however they may be added if a proposed little league field is built. People enjoy fishing from the shore and from boats in this area.



Paddling Upstream

Due to the hazards of the dam, it's unwise to paddle downstream toward the Route 6 bridge. Instead, head upriver for 4.4 miles toward the dam at Rogers Corporation. There are some houses with yards that extend down to the river as you paddle upstream but the banks are generally undeveloped.



Even in mid-summer and droughts, the ponded water upstream of the launch tends to be navigable thanks to water backed up behind the dam. It's a good place for novice paddlers to enjoy the river.

There are islands and sand bars to explore, but it can be tricky to find the main branch of the river. Stay to the left as you paddle upstream. This area is especially good for fishing and watching birds and wildlife that depend on the rich habitat. During the summer, you will likely see and hear small planes using the Danielson Airport.

Outfitter

Five Mile Outfitters (860-779-2160) is located at 99 Commerce Avenue in Danielson, about 1.5 miles away. From Route 6 at the bridge, turn north onto Route 12 and enter Danielson. Turn left on Commerce Avenue just before the railroad crossing. Store is at the end of the road, on the left. The store sponsors events and is steadily building the boating component of the business.

Vehicular Portage: Drive around Quinebaug (Killingly) Dam from Brooklyn Riverside Park (River Mile 42.6) to Wayne LaFreniere Canoe Launch in Killingly (River Mile 43.8)

1.75 miles by road

Drive uphill out of the park, turn left on Day Street, then left on Route 6 at the light. Go exactly one mile on Route 6, then turn right onto Wauregan Road (CT 12 south) at the traffic light. In .1 mile, turn right into the sewage treatment plant entrance; there is a sign for the canoe launch. Continue straight to the back of the parking lot by the baseball fields. Park and carry your boat past the baseball fields to the launch, adjacent to the paved Quinebaug River Trail, about 500 feet.

River Mile 43.0

Quinebaug (Killingly) Dam – DANGER – Do Not Paddle!

Lat/Long: 41.801527°, -71.887553°



Stay away from this dam, especially in moderate and high flows! Instead, get a good look at the dam, cascading water and powerhouse from the Route 6 bridge and Quinebaug River Trail – a lovely riverfront esplanade.

River Mile 43.8

Killingly CT



Canoe Launch: Wayne R. LaFreniere Memorial (river left)

43 Wauregan Road, Killingly CT 06239

Lat/Long: 41.793788°, -71.889130°

Driving Directions

From I-395, take Exit 91 onto Route 6 West. In less than half a mile, then left onto Wauregan Road (CT 12 south) at the traffic light. In .1 mile, turn right into the sewage treatment plant entrance; there is a sign for the canoe launch. Continue straight to the back of the parking lot by the baseball fields.

Parking & Access to the River

There is plenty of parking available, even if ball games are in progress. Park and carry your boat down the gravel driveway between the baseball fields to the paved Quinebaug River Trail. Turn left onto the trail and carry about 100 feet more to the kiosk. Watch for walkers and cyclists as this is a popular trail. There are portable toilets in the Little League complex.





The put-in is down a short gravelly slope by the kiosk, on the downstream side of a small peninsula formed by a tree. The river always flows swiftly in this stretch, but the protected launch sets you off downstream very smoothly. Several kayakers can fit comfortably side by side on the slope and more can fit on the grassy shoulder of the trail near the kiosk. Thanks to UNFI for funding the installation of this water trail information kiosk.



Paddling to Robert Manship Park

This is the longest and most challenging segment of water trail on the Quinebaug. You can paddle 5.3 miles to the CT DEEP Fish Hatchery, or continue on to Robert Manship Park in Canterbury for a ten-mile outing. Along the way, you'll encounter lots of quick-water, several Class II rapids, spiky remnants of dams, some flat-water and no portages. It is a challenging outing for experienced paddlers.

With moderate flows, this stretch of the river moves swiftly with broad, powerful current. The banks are low and forested with residential neighborhoods at first, then the banks rise higher as the stream gradient steepens. You may see Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagles and Osprey in this segment.



This is not a good section for novices; better choices include East Brimfield, West Thompson and the Putnam to Pomfret sections.

With moderate flows of 300 to 500 cfs on the [USGS Streamgage](#) at Cargill Falls, Putnam rocks are showing, the rapids are passable and the trip to Manship Park will take around four hours. With flows of 1000 cfs or more, it can be a two-hour trip. At high flows, spray skirts are important to keep turbulent water out of your boat. If the gauge reads lower than 400 cfs, you'll have a bumpy ride and may need to walk at times.



Those who go all the way to Butts Bridge will cover 15.6 miles, with less current and more meanders as you approach the still water of Aspinook Pond. Count on up to six hours to go the whole way.

River Mile 45.0

Remnants of Dyer Dam - HAZARD

Lat/Long: 41.781763°, -71.898719°



Be careful as you approach the remains of the Dyer Dam (destroyed in the 1955 hurricane), 1.2 miles downstream from the LaFreniere Launch. Iron rods protrude from concrete on river right. They are invisible at certain water levels and potentially lethal all the time. If you shoot through the notch in the old dam, watch for concrete fragments downstream. At higher flows you may not even notice it.

River Mile 45.5

Remnants of Diagonal Dam - HAZARD

Lat/Long: 41.778390°, -71.904999°



Half a mile below Dyer Dam are the remains of an old stone dam running diagonally across the river. It can be runnable on river left; if not, lift over or portage on river right. At higher flows you may not even notice it.

River Mile 47.8



Remnants of Wauregan Dam - HAZARD

Lat/Long: 41.749237°, -71.914131°



Wauregan Dam is another tricky spot with hazardous iron rods at certain flows. Stay left to avoid the rebar and spikes in the timber cribbing. The old dam is located where the river narrows, 600 feet above the Route 205 bridge. At higher flows you may not even notice it.

River Mile 49.1

Plainfield CT



Canoe Launch: CT DEEP Fish Hatchery (river left)

139-159 Trout Hatchery Road, Plainfield CT 06374

Lat/Long: 41.735065°, -71.919776°

Driving Directions

From I-395, take Exit 89 onto Route 14 West. Follow Route 14 for half a mile to a right onto Main Street, for .25 mile to a left onto School Street in Central Village and finally for .4 mile to the right onto Trout Hatchery Road. Two roads diverge to the right; don't take the sharp right, do take the right at 2 o'clock. On the 1.2 mile-long driveway, you'll pass the hatchery (on your left), then follow the winding road downhill toward the river. When the gate is open, you can drive to the launch and drop off your boat and gear, but you'll need to park outside the gate. When the gate is locked, it is a 570-yard carry to the water's edge.

Parking & Access to the River

When the gate is open, you can drive right to the launch and drop off or pick up boats, but you are not permitted to park there. There is plenty of parking outside the gate which is several hundred feet from the river.

The gravel launch ramp provides a roomy spot for lunch or a rest stop. It's a 10-minute walk uphill to the hatchery.

Paddling to Robert Manship Park

The 4.7 miles of paddling to Manship Park is somewhat less challenging than the miles above the hatchery, but there are several stretches of white water to paddle carefully. Generally, the river is wide, undeveloped, tree-lined and very beautiful!

Watch for the Route 14 bridge as you near the park. As you approach the take-out on river right, stay close to the right bank and arrange your group in a line. The broad current can make this a tricky landing. Have the first paddlers ashore catch subsequent boats as they pull in.



River Mile 53.7

Canterbury CT



Canoe Launch: Robert Manship Park (river right)

39-55 Lovell Lane, Canterbury CT 06331

Lat/Long: 41.698312°, -71.962861°

Directions

From I-395, take Exit 88 onto Route 14A West and stay on it for 3.2 miles. It will change names from Academy Hill Road, to Cemetery Road, to Canterbury Road and finally to Lovell Lane. Robert Manship Park is on the right just after the junction with Route 14 and the bridge across the river.

Parking & Access to the River

At the bottom of the sloping driveway, the launch is straight ahead. There are plenty of parking spaces in that corner of the park. Manship Park includes fields for youth sports and portable restrooms. The carry to the water is about 100 feet. The path to the water is moderately sloped and can be slippery.

Paddling to Butts Bridge Road Take-out at Aspinook Pond:

After Manship Park, the current slows and the river makes five large, meandering turns. The lack of current may make paddling feel sluggish and you may wonder whether the bends will ever end!

River Mile 59.3

Canterbury CT



Canoe Launch: By Butts Bridge on Aspinook Pond (river left)

67 Butts Bridge Road, (Rt. 688), Canterbury CT 06331

Lat/Long: 41.649933°, -71.970370°

Directions

About 800 feet (.15 mile) from the eastern end of Butts Bridge is the turn onto an unpaved access road adjacent to the power lines; it's a thousand feet to the river.

Parking & Access to the River

There is room for many cars. You can pull up a car right to the water's edge. The take-out itself is a nearly flat firm surface into the flatwater of Aspinook Pond. Anglers launch power boats here, too, so it can be busy during weekends. There are no public restrooms.

Paddling on Aspinook Pond:

The still water of the Pond and the easy access make this an excellent place for novice paddlers to learn new skills safely. The scenery is less dramatic than upriver, but you may see everything from Bald Eagles and Osprey to Wood Ducks, Canada geese and Mergansers. You can paddle downriver on the pond almost 3 miles to Jewett City.

Future Connections to the Shetucket River

There is not yet a take-out and portage at the Wyre Wynd Dam, but we hope in future editions to describe additional water trail segments downstream to Norwich. You can help make that happen as a volunteer. Please contact The Last Green Valley at 860-774-3300 to find out how to help.

Paddle Guide Contributors

Ernie Benoit - Webster Lake Association
Elsie Bisset - Town of Killingly
Janet Blanchette
Wendy & Tom Brennan
Lois Bruinooge - The Last Green Valley
Ken Butkiewicz – Dudley Trail & Greenway Network
Ken Carpenter
Lance Collins – Five Mile Outfitters
Alan Dabrowski
Barbara Day
Ed Eramian – Paddle Killingly
LyAnn Graff
Chip Lamb
Virge Lorents
John Monroe - National Park Service – Rivers & Trails Program
Mike Nelson
Ken Parker - French River Connection
Ken Pickren
Paul Pribula - Willimantic River Alliance
Bill Reid - The Last Green Valley
Eric Rumsey - Town of Killingly
US Army Corps of Engineers: Tom Chamberland, Matthew Coleman and Cathy (Dunlap) St. Andre

And to anyone we neglected to mention, we apologize. Let us know and we'll fix the oversight.

We greatly appreciate the support and cooperation of the following agencies and municipalities:

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Connecticut Light & Power Company
US Army Corps of Engineers – East Brimfield Project, West Thompson Lake Project
Town of Brooklyn CT
Town of Canterbury CT
Town of Dudley MA
Town of Killingly CT
Town of Plainfield CT
Town of Pomfret CT
Town of Putnam CT
Town of Southbridge MA

Photo Credits

Alan Dabrowski
John Monroe

Appendix

Internet Addresses, or URLs, Embedded in Text

American Canoe Association: www.americancanoe.org
American Whitewater: www.AmericanWhitewater.org
American Whitewater Safety Code: www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Wiki/safety:start
Appalachian Mountain Club: www.outdoors.org
Collinsville Canoe & Kayak: www.cckstore.com
Connecticut Boater's Guide at www.ct.gov/dep
East Brimfield Lake Recreation Area Brochure and Map: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/eb/eb1qmap.htm>
Eastern Mountain Sports Schools: www.emskayak.com
French River Connection: www.frenchriverconnection.org
Google® Earth: <http://www.google.com/earth/index.html>
LL Bean Kayaking Courses: www.llbean.com/outdoorsOnline/odp/courses/kayakingcourses/index.html
Massachusetts Boater Safety Handbook: <http://www.boat-ed.com/massachusetts/handbook/>
National Park Service – Rivers & Trails Program: www.nps.gov/rtca
The Last Green Valley: www.tlgv.org
Webster Lake Association: <http://www.websterlakeassociation.org/>
West Thompson Lake Campground Reservations: www.recreation.gov
West Thompson Lake Recreation Area Guide and Map: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/wtl/wtlhome.htm>
Westville Lake: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/wvl/wvlhome.htm>
Willimantic River Alliance: www.WillimanticRiver.org

Stream Gauges

River Mile 4.8 – USGS Streamgage at East Brimfield Dam

http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ma/nwis/uv/?site_no=01123360&agency_cd=USGS

River Mile 12.5 - USGS Streamgage at Westville Dam

http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv/?site_no=01123600&agency_cd=USGS

River Mile 20.6 – USGS Streamgage at Route 197 Bridge, Quinebaug

http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv/?site_no=01124000&agency_cd=USGS

River Mile 28.5 – USGS Streamgage at West Thompson Dam

http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv/?site_no=01124151&agency_cd=USGS

River Mile 31.4 - USGS Streamgage at Cargill Falls, Putnam

http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv/?site_no=01125500&agency_cd=USGS

Google® Earth Display of Every Stream Gauge by State, Region or

Nationwide http://waterwatch.usgs.gov/new/index.php?id=real&sid=w__kml

Note that you must download free software to use Google® Earth.

Google® Map of Every Stream Gauge by State, Region or Nationwide

http://waterwatch.usgs.gov/new/index.php?id=real&sid=w__gmap

Google Maps is available without a software download.

Reservoir Control - US Army Corps of Engineers: <http://www.reservoir-control.com/>

West Thompson Lake Real Time Water Levels: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/wtl/wtlhome.htm>

Click on Real Time Water Levels. Look under the column called Pool.



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