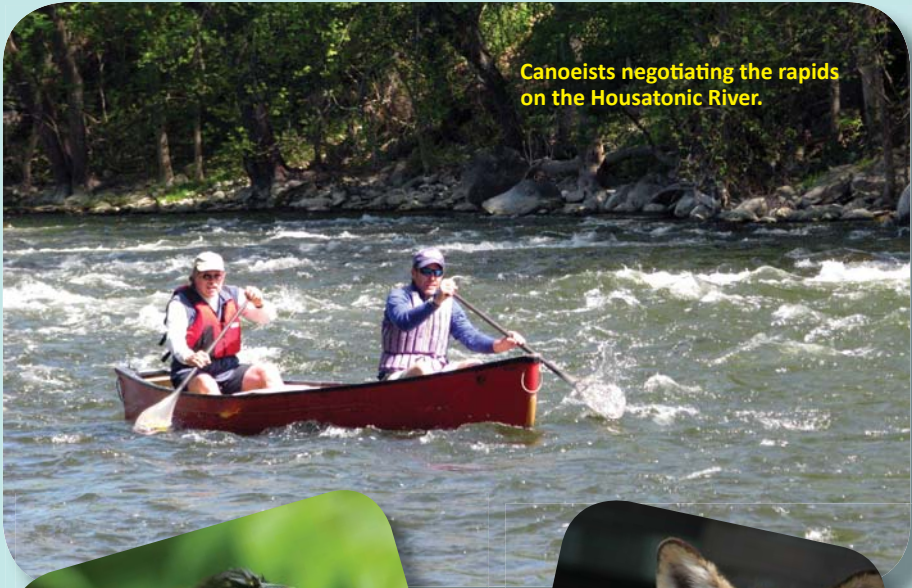


A scenic view of a river flowing through a lush, green forest. In the foreground, two men in orange life jackets are paddling a dark green canoe. To their left, another red canoe carries two men. Further down the river, several other groups of people are seen in various colored kayaks and canoes, some with umbrellas. The water is a deep blue-green, and the surrounding trees are dense and vibrant green.

# A Paddling Guide

to the Housatonic River  
in Connecticut



Canoeists negotiating the rapids on the Housatonic River.



Baltimore Oriole  
LAURA GOOCH PHOTO



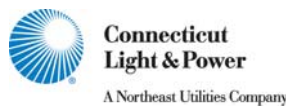
Red Fox  
ROY CHANG



Wood Ducks  
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

**IMPORTANT!**  
PLEASE READ INFORMATION ON PAGE 10  
ON HOW TO CLEAN YOUR BOATS

With sincere thanks to our generous funders who made  
“A Paddling Guide to the Housatonic River  
in Connecticut” possible.



IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENTS YOU LIVE IN



**KENT SCHOOL**

# A Paddling Guide to the Housatonic River in Connecticut

First Edition, 2012



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Connecticut Community Foundation  
Kent School

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This first edition entitled “A Paddling Guide to the Housatonic River in Connecticut” celebrates the popularity of canoeing and kayaking on the Housatonic River.

The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) gratefully acknowledges the following funders for making this guide possible: the Geoffrey C. Hughes Foundation, Inc., Iroquois Gas Transmission System, Housatonic Heritage – A National Heritage Area, Connecticut Light and Power – The Northeast Utilities System, the Connecticut Community Foundation, and Kent School.

We extend thanks to several HVA staff including Tim Abbott, Jane Bakker, Alison Dixon, Sam Dziekan, Elaine LaBella, Dennis Regan, Meghan Ruta, Dick Sears, Brenda Singer, and Lynn Werner for paddling, mapping, writing, editing and graphic design.

We also extend our deepest appreciation to Joe Ruggiero from Southbury, Connecticut; Schuyler Thomson from Norfolk, Connecticut; Bill Tingley, Sharon, Connecticut; Joe Marbec, Derby Dam manager, McCallum Enterprises; and Gary Smolen, Senior Engineer, and Brian Wood, Land Manager, FirstLight Power Resources who provided extensive input and technical support in creating this guide.

Thank you to all of our partners who work for a healthier Housatonic River in Connecticut. See page 62 for a complete list of these agencies and organizations.



In 2011, HVA published the Fourth Edition of “A Paddling Guide to the Housatonic River in Berkshire County” (see [hvatoday.org](http://hvatoday.org)). We dedicate this first edition paddling guide for the Connecticut section of the Housatonic River to all those who contributed to the first four versions of the Berkshire Guide.

Finally, thank you to all the paddlers and river enthusiasts who care about the Housatonic River. Get out and enjoy it!

---

White-Tailed Deer  
BY EMERY WAY

---

# ABOUT THE HOUSATONIC VALLEY ASSOCIATION



HVA, a tri-state nonprofit citizen's environmental group founded in 1941, works to conserve the natural character and environmental health in the 83 communities of the 2,000-square-mile Housatonic River watershed from its source in the Pittsfield, Massachusetts area to Long Island Sound by protecting and restoring land and water for this and future generations.

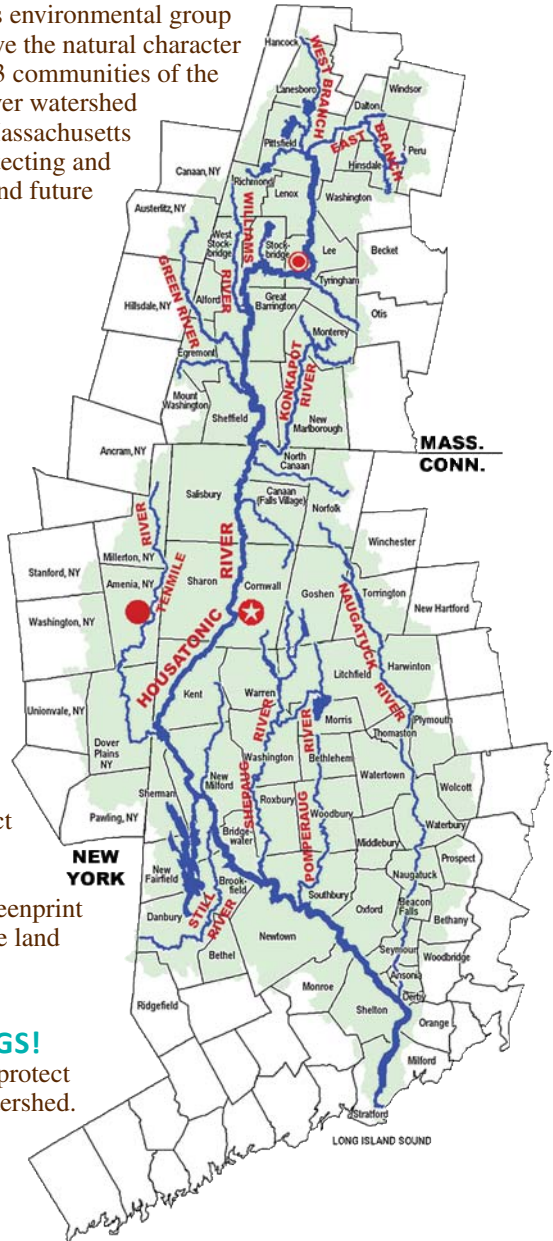
## With your help, HVA ...

- monitors water quality,
- adds sections to the Housatonic RiverBelt Greenway linking preserved space along the river corridor with hiking and biking trails,
- provides hands-on education to thousands of students,
- uses computer mapping to help towns measure the impact and benefits of land use and development,
- works to combat climate change by promoting low impact development, and
- sponsors the Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative in protecting more land across northwest Connecticut.

## YOU CAN DO GREAT THINGS!

Become an HVA member to help protect land and water throughout the watershed.

Visit [www.hvatoday.org](http://www.hvatoday.org)  
Click on **DONATE NOW!**



# THE RIVER'S HISTORY

## PRE-COLUMBIAN ERA – NATIVE AMERICANS

There has been a human presence in the Housatonic Valley of Connecticut for many thousands of years. Native American place names such as Weatogue, Aspetuck and Naromiyocknowhusunkatankshunk occur throughout the watershed. The name “Housatonic” itself derives from the Mohican “Usiadienuk” and has been translated as “place of stones” or “beyond the mountain place” or “river of the mountain place.” The Schaghticoke reservation in Kent, established in 1736, is one of the oldest in America.



Wigwam  
COURTESY OF THE  
INSTITUTE OF  
AMERICAN INDIAN  
STUDIES

## EARLY EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

Settlements in Puritan Connecticut initially concentrated near the coast and along fertile valleys served by navigable rivers. Milford and Stratford at the mouth of the Housatonic were first settled by European colonists in 1639, but towns were not incorporated in the hilly interior until the 18th century.

The border between Connecticut and New York remained in dispute until after the Revolution. At issue were several passes through the Highlands between the Housatonic and Hudson River valleys, as well as significant mineral deposits, including high quality iron ore and the limestone needed to refine it.

The Housatonic River represented another barrier to East-West travel, and colonial roadways made use of a few shallow fords and bridges. Two 19th century covered bridges survive today at West Cornwall and Bull's Bridge.

## INDUSTRIALIZATION

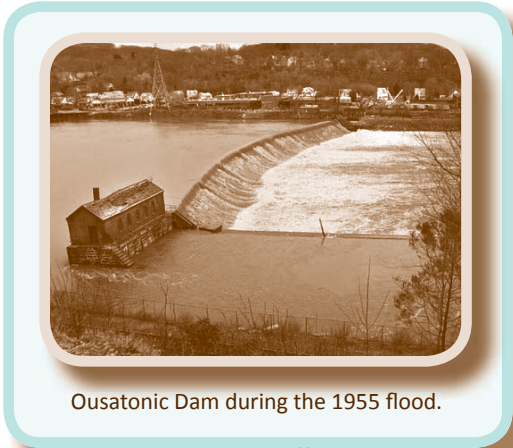
The Housatonic River and its tributaries in Connecticut were instrumental in the development of early Connecticut industry. The watershed provided the raw power to pioneer new technologies that enhanced the production of iron, brass and textiles. Blast furnaces driven by wood and water power operated in the 18th and 19th centuries in communities from Roxbury to Salisbury, where in 1762 Ethan Allen was a partner in the region's first iron furnace.

Farther downriver, Derby was a shipping and fishing port, where shipbuilding flourished for almost 200 years. The Naugatuck River valley, the





largest tributary of the Housatonic, was a major producer of rolled brass and copper and other manufactured items throughout the 19th century. In 1870 the first dam was constructed across the river between Derby and Shelton for the generation of electric power. Other hydroelectric power dams were built in Great Barrington, Falls Village (1914), Kent (Bull's Bridge, 1902), New Milford (Rocky River, 1928), Monroe (Stevenson, 1919) and Southbury (Shepaug, 1955). Hydroelectric power generation remains an important river use today.



Ousatonik Dam during the 1955 flood.

### DECLINE AND RENEWAL

The onset of the 20th century brought with it the decline of industrialization in the valley. Contributing factors included inadequate roadway transportation routes and railway systems along with competition from larger industries located outside of the Housatonic River valley.

Extreme flooding in 1955 after Hurricanes Connie and Diane devastated the region and gutted industrial areas in the Naugatuck valley. Today, only the lower reaches of the Housatonic valley maintain an industrial base.

Ironically, the very forces that halted industrial development lead to a renewal of the rural landscape. Old fields reverted to forests, and plans for an expanded interstate highway along the river were shelved in favor of flood control efforts in headwater tributaries. The industrial use of the river gave way to efforts to reclaim its ecological and recreational potential.

The passage of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments (1972) and the Clean Water Act (1977) created a system for reducing and controlling pollution into the river, by mandating treatment for the removal of chemicals from wastewater discharges. At the regional level, the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) was formed in 1941 to conserve the natural character and environmental health of the river and communities throughout the watershed. Other conservation partners, including the Housatonic River Commission and local land trusts and watershed organizations, now work together to protect and restore the lands and waters of the Housatonic valley for this and future generations.



## FUR, FIN, FEATHERS AND FLORA – A NATURAL HISTORY



Showy Lady  
Slipper

BY ARIEH TAL

The Housatonic River watershed boasts a diverse and abundant array of plant and wildlife species. Due to the changes in topography, geology, soils and climate the watershed provides the ideal setting for many types of habitat.

The watershed provides a number of “critical habitats,” or those which support the survival of rare and endangered species. Among the most important critical habitats are the marble ridges and ledges, caves, calcareous (calcium-rich or limy) wetlands and lakes and ponds found in the central portion of the watershed. Since the soil and surface water is less acidic, these areas are very fertile and rich in nutrients and are especially suited to agriculture.

### Silver maple

named for the silvery underside of its leaves, a native maple, also known as river or swamp maple, is common along rivers as it can withstand extensive flooding.

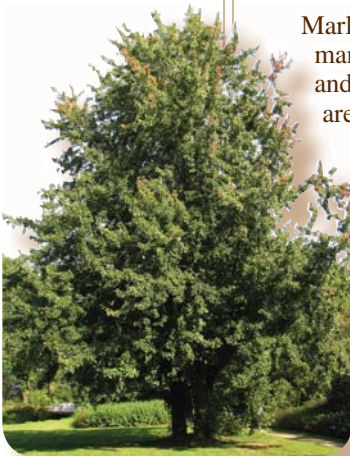
Marble ridges and ledges, such as the Great Falls area in Canaan and the Bull’s Bridge area in Kent, are home to many types of uncommon ferns, including the narrow-leaved spleenwort and the slender cliffbrake. Caves, predominantly found in Salisbury, are home to bats, invertebrates and salamanders.

Calcareous wetlands, such as Robbins Swamp in Canaan and Beeslick Pond and State Line Swamp in Salisbury, while supporting such lush and diverse plant species as the spreading globe flower and showy lady slipper, also attract an abundance of insects and game and non-game bird species.

Marl (hard water) lakes and ponds provide the ideal setting for many unique aquatic plants, such as pondweeds, and algal and fish species. Examples found in the Housatonic region are Twin Lakes in Salisbury and Mudge Pond in Sharon.

Other habitats, and their associated species, include flood plain forests, which were once abundant in the region until extensively cleared for agricultural uses. Today, only remnants remain from Falls Village to Kent. Dominant trees include cottonwood, black willow, sycamore and silver maple. Uncommon plants such as box elder, ostrich fern and variegated horsetail are found, along with a wide variety of songbirds.

The wind-swept high summits in the northwest corner, Canaan Mountain, Bear Mountain in Salisbury and Mohawk Mountain in Cornwall, contain rare pitch pine – scrub oak plant communities that host scientifically



Silver Maple

PHOTO BY DARKONE

important woody and herbaceous plants as well as lichens and mosses some of which are found nowhere else in the world.

Bogs (poorly drained acid wetlands) are characterized by a luxuriant cover of mosses, black spruce and larch. Several unusual and rare species of orchids and sedges are found here. The bog areas are extremely fragile and easily destroyed. Examples are Bingham Pond in Salisbury, Spectacle Pond in Kent and Black Spruce Bog atop Mohawk Mountain in Cornwall.

The valley's grassland areas include open meadows, pastureland, grassy meadows, golf courses and hayfields. Several rare breeding birds are limited to this habitat in the Housatonic region, such as the upland sandpiper and the short-billed marsh wren.

As the river approaches Long Island Sound, the estuary includes coastal salt marshes and mud flats that support cord-grasses, spikegrass, sedges and eelgrass.

The presence of wildlife is also associated with the diverse habitat found within the river valley. Ringnecked pheasant, cottontail rabbit, red fox and woodchuck are found in openland habitat, while white-tailed deer, gray fox, gray squirrel, snowshoe hare, porcupine, ruffed grouse and woodcock are found in woodland habitat.

River edges provide habitat for primarily furbearing species, such as the beaver, muskrat, raccoon, river otter and mink. Waterfowl found in the area include the Canada goose, blackduck, woodduck, blue-winged teal, ringnecked duck, common goldeneye, hooded and common merganser, great blue heron, peregrine falcon, bald eagle and osprey.

Reptiles such as the common snapping turtle, painted turtle and an occasional spotted or wood turtle may be seen sunning themselves on rocks or logs; sometimes a garter or common water snake may be observed gliding through the water. Amphibians also share the watercourse: green frogs, leopard frogs and bullfrogs are in abundance.

A river is the focal point of a watershed as life congregates near water so essential to existence. The Housatonic is a vital and dynamic natural resource to our region.



Snowy Egret  
BY STEVEN PINKER



Beaver  
BY STEVE HDC



## STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES!



Purple Loosestrife  
H. ZELL PHOTO

Invasive species outcompete native plants and animals, and harm the natural ecosystem. Invasive plants thriving in and along the Housatonic are the common reed (phragmites), purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed and yellow iris. curlyleaf pondweed, water chestnut and milfoil can be found in the river. Zebra mussels, an invasive animal species, are now in the Housatonic River.

Invasive species can be unwittingly transported by recreationists on their boats, fishing gear, clothing and even shoes and pets. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) recommends that you **CLEAN, DRAIN and DRY** before leaving a boat launch or put-in/takeout point.

**CLEAN:** Inspect and remove all visible plant, fish and animals, mud and other debris at the launch site – do not bring them home. Check your paddles, swim wear, PFDs, shoes and any other gear coming in contact with the water or river bottom – even your pet.

**DRAIN:** Eliminate all water from every conceivable space and item before you leave the area. Put your boat on an incline to allow the water to drain. Remove drain plugs, and drain foot gear, waders, swimming gear – everything in contact with the water.

**DRY:** Dry your equipment. If possible, allow five days of drying time before entering new waterways in hot/dry weather, and four weeks during cool/wet weather. If you cannot wait the prescribed time for drying your equipment, follow these guidelines to help prevent the spread of invasive species (CT DEEP and MA DCR).

### Clean, Drain and Dry is the law!

In Connecticut it's illegal and punishable with fines to transport invasive plants and animals on vessels or trailers. For a complete list of invasives in Connecticut, visit <http://www.ct.gov/dep> and search "invasive species."

DISINFECTANT	CONCENTRATION	CONTACT TIME
Steam/Scalding hot wash	140 degrees F	10 seconds
Chlorine Bleach/ Lysol/Boat Soap Solution	1 oz per gallon of water	10 minutes
Table Salt	1% solution (2/3 cup salt for 5 gallons water)	24 hours
Vinegar	as sold – 100%	20 minutes
Freezing	< 32 degrees F	24 hours



Phragmites

**Note:** All decontamination procedures should be done away from water bodies and storm drains draining to watercourses.



Zebra Mussel  
USGS PHOTO

**ZEBRA MUSSELS (DREISSENA POLYMORPHA)** were discovered in the Housatonic River in Massachusetts in 2009, and later found downstream in the river in lakes

Lillinonah, Zoar and Housatonic.

Zebra mussels are black and white striped bivalve mollusks, and spread rapidly, covering rocks and clogging intake pipes and other structures. Once zebra mussels become established in a water body, there is no known method to eradicate them. Clean, Drain and Dry, and then follow the recommendations on page 10 to ensure your boat is free of zebra mussels.



Green Crab  
BY GEORGE CHERNILEVSKY

**GREEN CRAB AND ASIAN SHORE CRAB** both feed on lobster, worms and other crabs, and bivalves such as oysters, clams, scallops and mussels, disrupting the food web and the shell fishing industry. The green crab, about 2.5 to 3.5 inches long, can be green to orange to red, with five evenly spaced spines like triangular teeth on either side of its shell. The smaller Asian shore crab – about 1.5 inches – can be green, purple, orange-brown or red with a square shaped shell and three spines on either side.

**CURLYLEAF PONDWEED**, one of the state’s most common invasive plants, has a flattened stem, stalkless leaves with wavy edges, and can produce large dense mats creating problems for recreation and aquatic ecosystems.

**WATER CHESTNUT** is a rooted annual plant with triangular shaped floating leaves, and feathery submerged leaves. This highly invasive plant has been identified at the confluence of the Still and Housatonic rivers. It’s sharp spiny fruits can inflict painful wounds and dense growth can restrict recreation.

**DIDYMO (DIDYMOSPHENIA GEMINATE)**, an invasive freshwater alga, is a potential threat to the Housatonic watershed.

Didymo – sometimes called “rock snot” due to its slimy appearance – attaches to plants, rocks and other hard surfaces. It can produce

thick gray, white or brown (but never green) mats covering the streambed, smothering aquatic life and severely limiting recreation. Didymo is most often found in cold, shallow streams and rivers having a rocky bottom. Found in trout streams across New England, Didymo was confirmed in the West Branch of the Farmington River in 2011.

If you think you have found didymo, water chestnut, or zebra mussels, take a photo and report it to the CT DEEP at 860-424-3474.



1



2



3

- 1 Curlyleaf Pondweed
- 2 Water Chestnut Plant
- 3 Spiny Fruit

BY CHARLOTTE PYLE  
COURTESY OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
CONSERVATION  
SERVICES



Didymo  
MICHIGAN  
TECHNOLOGICAL  
UNIVERSITY PHOTO

## HEALTH OF THE RIVER

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Like many rivers and streams throughout the nation, water quality in the Housatonic has improved dramatically due to the mandates of the state and federal Clean Water Acts. Today, the Housatonic River is a nationally ranked fishing, boating and hiking destination.

Connecticut has a history as a national leader in water quality management, passing the Connecticut Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1967 – five years before the federal Clean Water Act. The state CWA marked the establishment of Connecticut’s water pollution control program requiring stringent wastewater treatment for municipal sewers and industrial discharges from factories.



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Brook Trout  
BY DUANE RAVER  
USFWS

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In 1972, the national Clean Water Act eliminated direct piping of pollutants into all of the nation’s waters and required that point source discharges (from factories and sewage pipes) be monitored, treated and controlled by permits. Consequently, municipal and industrial water treatment plants were built.

A burst of pro-environment laws followed the CWA. The state’s Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act (1972) ensured greater protection of rivers, small streams and wetlands. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (formed 1971) was allowed to levy civil penalties against polluters. Large volumes of water were no longer allowed to be taken out of the river without a permit, water was protected from construction runoff, and the Clean Water Fund provided funding to cities and towns to upgrade or install new water treatment facilities. Later laws include the 2005 Act Concerning Minimum Water Flow Regulations and the 2011 Stream Flow Standards and Regulations.

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Swifts Bridge  
in Sharon

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Although the Housatonic River is cleaner, a great deal of work still needs to be done to protect and improve our river resource.

One of the greatest contaminants affecting the Housatonic River are polychlorinated biphenyls, a family of chemicals more commonly known as PCBs. The manufacture and use of PCBs, used chiefly as a coolant in electrical transformers, capacitors and heat exchangers beginning in 1929, has been banned in the United States since 1977. For a period of 40 years before the ban, General Electric's Transformer Division discharged PCBs into the upper Housatonic River and contaminated fill was used within the watershed.

Due to its stable nature, PCBs persist in the environment creating a long-lasting concern. PCBs are heavy and not very soluble in water and accumulate in undisturbed river sediments. PCBs then enter the food chain through fish and aquatic invertebrates that reside in and feed on the river bottom. As these benthic fauna are eaten by other fish, fowl or reptiles, the concentrations of PCBs rise as they are stored in the fatty tissue of the predator and can build up in fish to levels of a thousand times higher than in the water.

In 1977, Connecticut issued a health advisory against eating fish from the Housatonic River. Currently, the Connecticut Department of Public Health advises against eating trout, catfish, eel, carp and northern pike caught in the Housatonic. Limited consumption of bass, white perch, bullheads and panfish (yellow perch, sunfish, etc.) is also advised especially for pregnant women and young children. For more information visit [www.ct.gov/dph/fish](http://www.ct.gov/dph/fish) or call 1-877-458-FISH (3474).

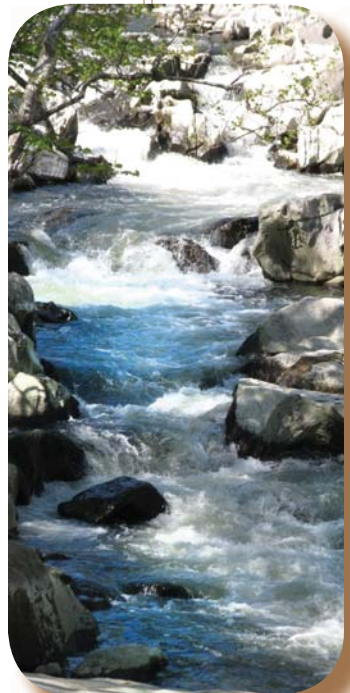
Unlike with fish consumption, the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the EPA has assessed that risks from PCB exposure to paddlers using the Housatonic access areas on a frequent basis are very low. The agencies recommend minimizing skin contact with sediment and washing it from your skin as soon as possible. Visit <http://www.epa.gov/region1/ge/pcbshhealthandenviro/pcbfact.pdf> for more information.

Negotiations to clean up the Housatonic River began in 1991 and a settlement was memorialized in a Consent Decree between the EPA, the State of



Mallard  
BY KEITH OF PHEANIX'S  
PHOTOSTREAM

The Housatonic  
at Bull's Bridge  
in Kent



Connecticut, the State of Massachusetts, and General Electric in 2000. Two phases of cleanup have since been completed: the first one-half mile of river adjacent to the GE facility in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in 2002 and the next 1.5-mile stretch in 2007. Planning for the long-term monitoring of the rest of the river, including the Connecticut section of the Housatonic River, and additional cleanup of the remaining heavily contaminated areas, is underway. For more information visit <http://www.epa.gov/region01/ge>.

With PCB cleanup underway, polluted runoff has become the greatest threat to the future health of the river. Polluted runoff is caused by rainfall and snowmelt moving over the ground (stormwater) picking up natural and human-made pollutants, eventually depositing them into stormdrains which empty into rivers. Stormwater collects excess fertilizer, pesticide, oil, road sand, salt, chemical deicer, and animal waste in its path, heating up as it travels along which can be lethal to fish and other aquatic wildlife. Because stormwater is from many sources, it is difficult to control.

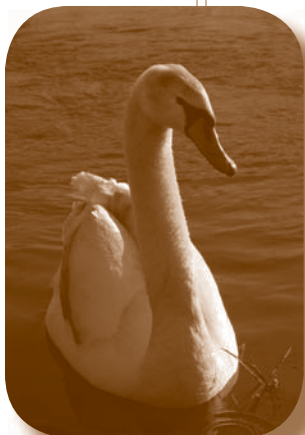
Polluted runoff can also lead to excessive sedimentation in the lower river and estuary, which can bury critical estuary habitat in the river and Long Island Sound.

Also a threat is an excess of nutrients (phosphorous and nitrogen) which leads to reduced water quality, low dissolved oxygen and fish kills, and water conditions undesirable for recreation. Nutrients flowing downstream cause similar problems in the estuary and Long Island Sound.

Commonly found in stormwater, nutrients were recognized as a source of impairment to the river as early as the 1970s, when the federal CWA was first passed, and noticeable nuisance algae blooms first began occurring in Lake Lillinonah.

Nutrients also accumulate in the river from municipal sewage treatment plants and other discharges, erosion and runoff from agricultural operations, failing septic systems, leaking sewer systems and atmospheric deposition such as acid rain.

In 2012, after decades of documented nutrient-related impairments in the river, HVA spearheaded a project to work with its partners in the watershed as well as state and federal agencies to develop a plan to reduce the amount of nutrients flowing into the river each year. Together, we are working to make sure that the Housatonic River continues toward a path of optimal river health.





# BOATING SAFETY

Before beginning a paddling trip, be sure you know the fundamentals of boating safety. For additional information about boating safely, including their top ten paddling tips, visit the American Canoe Association's website: [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org).

## USE OF PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDs)

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's website offers these safety rules for paddlers ([www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2686&q=322304&Nav\\_GID=1620](http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2686&q=322304&Nav_GID=1620)):

- Wear your life jacket (personal flotation device or PFD)! Is it the proper size and in good condition? There must be a wearable life jacket aboard for each person. From October 1st through May 31st, you must wear a life jacket (state law). All children 12 and under must wear a life jacket at all times.
- Don't stand up in a manually propelled vessel, such as a canoe, kayak or rowboat.
- Always paddle directly into or away from the wake of larger boats.
- If you CAPSIZE, stay with the manually propelled vessel. If you are in a strong current or whitewater, float down river feet first and toes up with the vessel ahead of you.
- Do not drink alcohol before or while operating a manually propelled vessel. Alcohol affects balance, coordination, and judgment.
- For more stability in rough conditions, kneel on the bottom instead of sitting on the seats.
- The most experienced paddler should take the stern position.
- Know the conditions before you set out. Always paddle within your abilities.
- Load the manually propelled vessel evenly, fore and aft and side to side.
- Be sure that you have the right boat for the conditions.
- Wear proper clothing, including a hat. If you end up in the water, do not remove your clothes. They help you float and protect you against hypothermia.
- Stay away from low head dams. They are extremely dangerous from both up and down stream.

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Great Falls Dam  
BY TIM ABBOTT

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- Rough water, whitewater, or rapids are no place for beginners. Always wear a solid, correctly fitted helmet when whitewater canoeing or kayaking.
- Paddle near shore, out of channels.
- Paddle with a partner.
- Always leave a FLOAT PLAN with someone ashore. Be specific about where you plan to go and when you will be back. Be sure to report back in when you return.



Phragmites  
BY PETER MULLIGAN

Remember that the major causes of boating accidents are improper loading, overloading, disregard for weather or water conditions, improper lookout, capsizing or falling overboard – and – failure to wear a PFD.

### WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET! IT FLOATS! YOU DON'T!

PFDs not only provide additional flotation in case of capsizing or unexpected swim, they also provide an essential layer of warmth in cold water and protection for your body against rocks or other boats.

## THE INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY

**Flatwater** – There is little or no current. The river's surface is smooth and unbroken. Paddling upstream is easy.

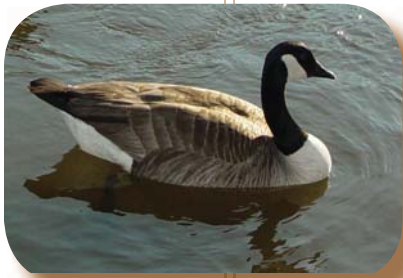
**Class I** – Moving water with a few riffles and small waves. Few or no obstructions.

**Class II** – Easy rapids with waves up to three feet and wide, clear channels that are obvious without scouting. Some maneuvering required.

**Class III** – Rapids with high, irregular waves often capable of swamping an open canoe. Narrow passages that often require complex maneuvering. May require scouting from shore.

**Class IV** – Long, difficult rapids with constricted passages that often require precise maneuvering in very turbulent waters.

Scouting from shore is often necessary and conditions make rescue difficult. Generally not possible for open canoes. Boaters in covered canoes and kayaks should be able to Eskimo roll.



The Housatonic River in Connecticut has stretches of flatwater intermixed with stretches of Class I, II, III and IV rapids. For each river section described in this guide, the level of difficulty is indicated for average river flow and

should be respected. The level of flow, measured in cubic feet per second (cfs), can greatly change river conditions: Higher flows and flood conditions can greatly increase the level of difficulty, to the point of being dangerous.

At flood conditions, the river becomes silt-laden and submerged obstacles are not visible. Water quality can also become unhealthy due to overflowing sewage systems and polluted stormwater runoff. All paddlers must determine for themselves whether they are adequately skilled and physically able to paddle each section.

If you still choose to paddle during these conditions, be sure to wear your life jacket and travel with experienced paddlers. Class levels in the descriptions increase at higher levels of river flow.

Due to changing weather, flow and river conditions, the publisher, authors and sponsors cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy of the river section descriptions provided at any specific time.

### FLOW INFORMATION

Real time stream flow data is provided by the USGS at <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ct/nwis/current/?type=flow>. Scroll down the page to the Housatonic River Basin section, and click on the Number Station on the left that is nearest to your paddling destination.

A suggested minimum flow for paddling the Housatonic River would be 150 cfs. Keep in mind that stream gages can malfunction for any number of reasons, so paddlers are advised to always “scout” river conditions carefully upon arrival as a safety precaution.

### HIGH WATER CAUTION

Extreme caution and great consideration is advised. Extra debris may be in the water and obstacles normally evident may be hidden. Water quality may be unhealthy. At these higher levels, only skilled paddlers should consider paddling and all paddlers should wear PFDs.



### CSFs

The cfs flow recommendations here are intended to be a broad guideline for minimum or maximum flow conditions. If you are paddling the river often, consider keeping notes or a log book on conditions to learn the river and plan future trips to match your skill level or interest.

Bull's Bridge  
Dam in Kent



## INTRODUCTION

The Housatonic River begins its 149-mile journey in southwestern Massachusetts. The main stem of the river, formed by the joining of the West and Southwest branches of the Housatonic River in Pittsfield, flows 132 miles in a southerly direction, dropping 959 feet in elevation on its way to its outfall at Long Island Sound at Milford Point in Connecticut.

### Be responsible river stewards!

Pick up some trash on every trip and become an advocate for the Housatonic River.

The river and its tributaries drain an area of 1,948 square miles. This area is referred to as the watershed. From its headwaters flowing south toward Great Barrington, the valley is narrow and the river flows quickly, characterized by several swift drops in elevation, before it emerges from the Berkshire Hills.

Below Great Barrington, the valley flattens and broadens out. This region is rich in farmland, and through this section the river flows more slowly, meandering its way through the valley to Falls Village in Connecticut.

### Strainer

is a downed tree blocking whole or part of the channel. Due to potentially strong currents at strainers, exercise great caution.

As the Housatonic River moves into Connecticut, the valley changes dramatically. The valley walls narrow and are flanked by hills on either side. The river now flows through a much harder substrate consisting of limestone, quartz and granite, and the river bottom becomes much rockier. There are still some agricultural activities in this northwestern part of Connecticut due to the presence of the river's nutrient rich floodplains.

Just south of Bull's Bridge power station in Gaylordsville, water is diverted from the river and pumped uphill, through a penstock, to Candlewood Lake in New Milford, the first pump storage reservoir built in the country. Constructed in 1926, it is the largest (5,400 acres) lake in Connecticut. When river levels are too low to support the power generation at the Rocky River Power Station in New Milford, lake water is sent rushing down the penstock and through the generators.

### River Right, River Left

In this guide these terms refer to your left or right as you face downstream.

Upon leaving New Milford, the river again changes dramatically, becoming a series of three in-stream lakes. Each lake is formed by a hydroelectric power dam. The Shepaug Dam forms Lake Lillinonah (1,900 acres) in Bridgewater. Farther south in Monroe, the Stevenson Dam, which is the largest, creates Lake Zoar (975 acres).

The third lake is Lake Housatonic (328 acres), formed by the Derby Dam between Derby and Shelton.

The elevation of the Housatonic lakes may vary as they are now “run of the river.” This means that water is no longer “ponded and released” for power generation. To learn the elevation of the ponds, call 1-888-41-RIVER (1-888-417-4837).

Below the Derby dam, the river begins its final change, becoming an estuary, where salt and fresh water mix. The Housatonic River estuary produces one-third of all the seed oysters which are a vital part of Connecticut’s commercial shellfish industry. In this lower 12-mile section of the river are tidal wetlands and salt marshes which provide important habitat for plants, birds, shellfish, finfish and other aquatic life. The Housatonic River enters Long Island Sound at Milford Point.

The waters of the Housatonic River provide excellent whitewater and flatwater canoeing and kayaking. For the expert, Rattlesnake Rapids in Falls Village and Bull’s Bridge in Kent offer challenging whitewater runs.

Flatwater canoeing is at its best in the gentler currents found north of the dam at Great Falls in Falls Village and down through West Cornwall and Kent as the river flows past meadows and picturesque farms.

The river from New Milford south offers a more sedate lake paddle until one reaches the tidal currents below the Derby Dam.

This paddle guide divides the river in Connecticut into nine navigable sections beginning just below the Great Falls Dam in Falls Village. Each section includes a map, driving directions, and GPS coordinates to the accesses and a brief description of the section.

Accesses are described as official or informal, primitive or developed, and fair, good or excellent.

An *official access* is one that is recognized and managed either by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) or the local city or town.

*Informal accesses* are commonly used, but are mostly on private property and do not have river access signage. These accesses are rated excellent, good, or fair depending on the ease of use.

*Primitive or developed* refers to the degree of construction of the access.

### Riffles

occur where a drop in elevation causes water to move more quickly. The water in a riffle can be a bit choppy.

### Rapids

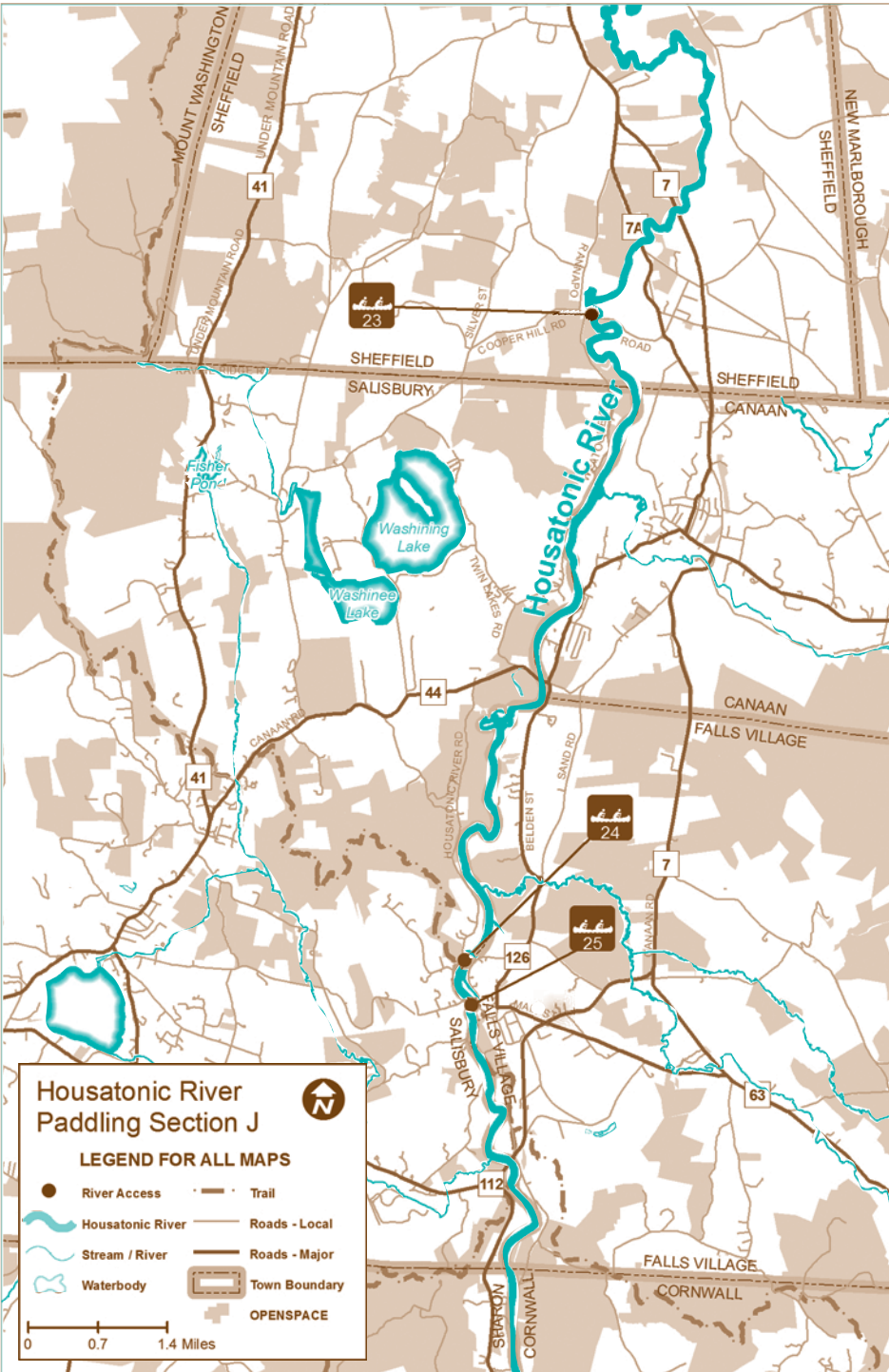
occur where the river current is very fast and turbulent, producing whitewater.

### Line-down

To lead the canoe through rough or obstacle-strewn water with a painter, which is a rope attached to the bow or stern.

### Back Paddle

Paddling backwards will move the boat in a reverse direction. It will also stop or slow the boat when in a forward motion.



## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION J

Rannapo Road, Ashley Falls, Mass. to the Great Falls, Falls Village, Conn.

**Distance:** 8.6 miles

**Time:** 4–5 hours

**Towns:** Ashley Falls, Mass.

**Tributaries:** Konkapot, Blackberry, and Hollenbeck brooks

**USGS Maps:** Ashley Falls, South Canaan

**Difficulty:** Flatwater, Class II rapids at the breached Canaan dam, portage trail available.

### PUT-IN



**Access 23 – Rannapo Road, Ashley Falls, Mass. (N42.05869; W73.34895)**

**Informal Access (good, primitive); limited road-side parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE NORTHERN INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 7 AND ROUTE 7A (ASHLEY FALLS ROAD) IN MASSACHUSETTS

Travel south on Route 7A for 3.2 miles towards Ashley Falls.

Take a right onto Rannapo Road and continue for about two miles. After crossing the river, pull up on the right shoulder.

There is a steep bank leading down to a backwater stream.

Launch into this channel; within a few yards, it connects

with the river.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access 24 – Great Falls Dam, Salisbury, Conn. (N41.96384; W73.37174)**

**Official access (primitive, excellent); off-road parking.**

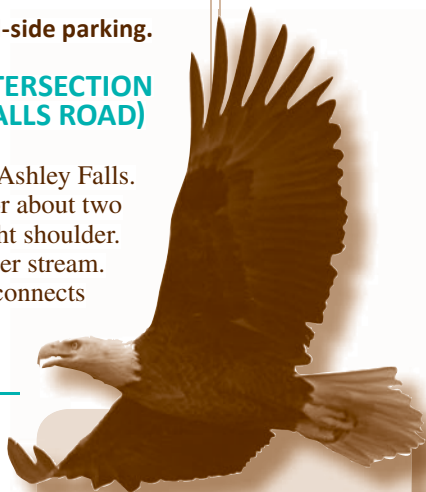
### DIRECTIONS FROM ACCESS 23 (RANNAPO ROAD) TO ACCESS 24 (GREAT FALLS DAM)

Head west on Rannapo Road for about 500 feet toward Weatogue Road. Take a left onto Weatogue Road. Follow Weatogue Road for 3.5 miles. At the intersection of Twin Lakes Road and Weatogue Road, bear left onto Twin Lakes Road and continue on Twin Lakes Road for 0.8 miles until the intersection with Route 44. Take

a sharp right onto US 44 W/Canaan Road and continue on Route 44 W for 0.5 miles. Take the first left onto Housatonic River

### Sections A through J

are in “A Paddling Guide to the Housatonic River in Berkshire County” published in 2011 by the Housatonic Valley Association.



#### Bald Eagles

Don't be surprised to spot a bald eagle! Once federally listed as endangered, bald eagles were removed from the federal endangered species list in 2007. In Connecticut they are listed as threatened.

Bald Eagle  
GARY ROTHSTEIN PHOTO

## The Salisbury Association Land Trust

works to protect important places in and around Salisbury. With several other conservation partners, including HVA, more than five linear miles of riverfront have been protected.



Road. Follow Housatonic River Road for three miles. Turn left into the gated parking area upstream of the dam at Great Falls. The access is managed by FirstLight Power Resources. At this access, enjoy riverside trails including an interpretive trail, views of Great Falls and picnic area.

## DESCRIPTION

In this section the Housatonic is predominantly flatwater flowing in wide meandering bends. After launching, paddle down the channel and, upon entering the Housatonic River, turn right to continue downstream under the Rannapo Road Bridge. For some this is considered the most beautiful stretch of the Housatonic. Initially, river left, and later on both sides, cow pastures extend into the floodplain.

On river right, paddle past the floodplain forest and ledges of Bartholomew's Cobble, a property of The Trustees of Reservations. You may even see a hiker on the trails that follow the river. The alkaline (sweet) soils and marble bedrock of the Cobble support a great diversity of flora – especially spring wildflowers and ferns (among the most diverse in North America – making this a National Natural Landmark).

At 1.3 miles, Konkapot River enters river left. Just downstream of this confluence, you paddle into Connecticut. The high banks on the inside of the meanders show evidence of bank swallow nest entrances.

As you proceed downstream, river left becomes more forested. At 2.4 miles the Blackberry River enters river left and soon after the confluence you will paddle past an old railroad bridge pier in the middle of the river. Cars pass along Weatogue Road which parallels the river for more than a half mile.

After Weatogue Road, the old Canaan dam is across the river with rapids that run river right around an island. **DO NOT ATTEMPT** to go over the dam because of the danger of debris and rebar in the water. Portage river left is the prudent route. Around the dam is a small trail, about 200 feet long a few hundred yards upstream of the dam. If there is a wooden dock, skip the temptation to use it! It is not very stable and is marked private. Access to the trail behind the dock is a steep and sandy bank.

## Ames Iron Works

After taking out, consider taking a short, interpretive walk along the river to learn about Ames Iron Works (established 1832) which once existed at this site and Amesville (now Falls Village), a village which grew across the river in response to the ironworks.



At the dam, you are about five miles from Great Falls. As you continue to paddle below the dam, the forested edge, river left, gives way to houses. At about five miles into your trip (2.5 hours) you will pass under Dutcher's Bridge (Route 44).

### Holes in the riverbank

are probably made by colonies of bank swallows. The belted kingfisher also nests in burrows that they dig into sandy banks. The male bank swallow will use his feet, wings and conical bill to dig a burrow into the bank and create a nest chamber. The female bank swallow constructs the nest using straw, grasses, leaves and rootlets.

Hollenbeck River, an excellent cold water trout stream, enters river left. You are less than one mile north of the take-out at Great Falls. Pay attention after this confluence. Stay river right and prepare to take out on the grassy area **BEFORE** the parking lot.

In high water with a swift current, there is danger of being swept over the dam and falls below. This recreational area and access, as well as the hydroelectric station is owned and managed by FirstLight Power Resources ([www.firstlightpower.com](http://www.firstlightpower.com)). The parking area gate is closed at sunset.



### Falls Village Dam

Construction of the Falls Village Dam was completed in 1913. This is the first of four dams on the Housatonic River in Connecticut that were built for hydroelectric power and recreation purposes. At the south end of the take-out parking lot is a short rustic walking trail that affords a dramatic view of the falls.

### WARNINGS!

1. Do not attempt to go over the old Canaan dam after Weatogue Road because of the danger of debris and rebar in the water.
2. Less than one mile after Hollenbeck River is the Great Falls. Take out on the grassy area **BEFORE** the parking lot.

In high water with a swift current, there is danger of being swept over the dam and falls below.

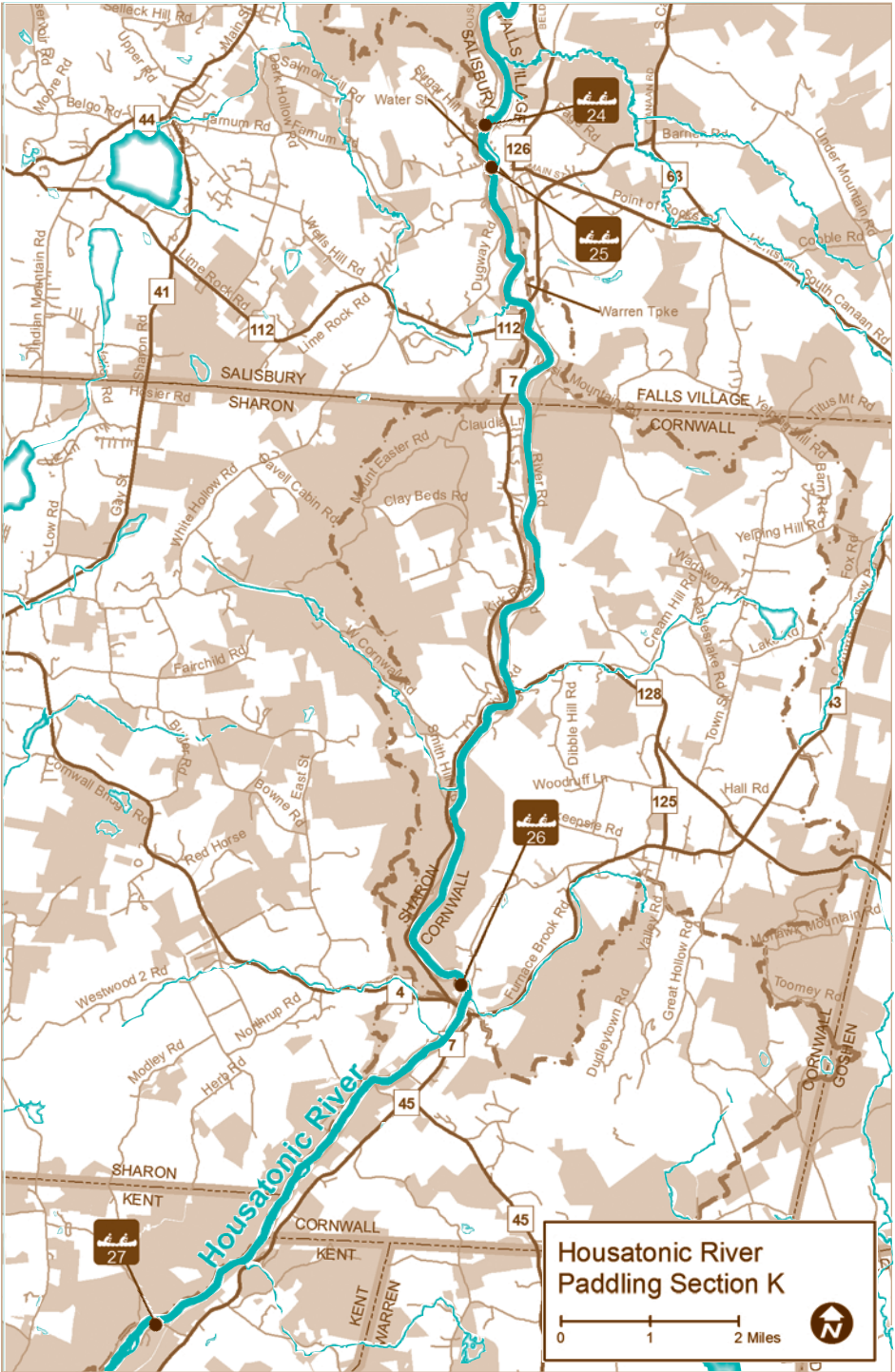
### Brook Trout

BY DUANE RAVER  
USFWS



### Native Brook Trout

survive in only the coldest and cleanest water. They serve as indicators of the health of the rivers and streams they inhabit. As such, brook trout often act as the "canary in the coal mine" to signal the excellent health of a waterway or alert us to potential water quality problems.



## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION K

Great Falls, Falls Village to Housatonic Meadows State Park, Sharon

**Distance:** 9.5 miles

**Time:** 4.5 hours

**Towns:** Falls Village, Canaan, Lime Rock, West Cornwall, Sharon, Cornwall Bridge

**Tributaries:** Hollenbeck River, Factory Brook, Salmon Kill

**Rating:** Occasional riffles and boulders, technical, whitewater, intermediate whitewater experience recommended.

### PUT-IN



**Access 25 – Below Great Falls Dam at FirstLight Falls Village Station Canoe Access; (N41.957272; W73.370154)**

**Formal access (good); limited parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTES 7 AND 44 IN CANAAN

Travel south on Route 7 for 7.67 miles to traffic light at the intersection with Warren Turnpike (Warren No. 1 Turnpike on some maps) and Lime Rock Station Road. Take a right turn onto Warren Turnpike and travel 1.4 miles to stop sign. Go left onto Water Street and cross the Amesville Bridge (a one-lane bridge). Take an immediate left after the bridge onto Dugway Road and then left into the FirstLight Falls Village Station Dam Canoe Access site.

### ALTERNATIVE DIRECTIONS

The Amesville Bridge may be closed occasionally for repairs from 2012 to 2014. If so, continue south through the traffic light on Route 7 at Warren Turnpike and Lime Rock Station Road for another 0.2 miles and bear right onto Route 112 toward Lime Rock. At 0.8 miles, take a right turn at the Trinity Episcopal Church onto Dugway Road. Travel 2.1 miles and make a right turn into the FirstLight Falls Village Station Canoe Access.

**NOTE:** If the warning horn sounds from the power station (river left), water will be rising.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access 26, Housatonic Meadows State Park picnic area, just north of intersections of Routes 7 and 4; (N41.823637; W73.37275). Formal access (good, developed); adequate parking.**



### Hanging Gates

Just downstream from Great Falls are gates hanging above the river, which are used for whitewater races.

Kayaker at Great Falls

BY TIM ABBOTT



## DIRECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTES 112 AND 7, NEAR LIME ROCK.

Travel south on Route 7 for 8.1 miles to the entrance of the picnic area at Housatonic Meadows State Park.

**Note:** This is not the first entrance to the park you will pass. The first entrance leads to the camping ranger's office and camping sites. At the second entrance, turn left into the park and stay to the right following the paved driveway down to the parking area and boating access ramp.

## DESCRIPTION

**WARNING:** Just below the dam is Rattlesnake Rapid. This 0.25-mile stretch is intense Class IV whitewater rapids with large rock outcroppings and dangerous undercurrents. Recommended **ONLY** for the most experience and skilled decked boaters. This section really only runs in high water conditions.

At the FirstLight Power Station put-in, the river takes a sharp bend to the left with several large boulders river right. Gradually move center river when going through the bend. This section is easy to scout before beginning to paddle.

After the initial rapids at the put-in and below, the gentle relief of the valley produces flatwater conditions of slow-moving water. Just after putting in here, stay river left as several large rocks litter the waterway along the right side.

About one mile below the put-in, the river sweeps right. Above the bank on the left are the athletic fields of the Housatonic Valley Regional Middle and High schools. Across from the school, the cold, clear water of the Salmon Kill River enters river right.

Shortly below this tributary, pass under the Route 7 bridge. Notice the old bridge abutments on both sides of the river. Paddle either side of the deteriorated bridge piling blocking the middle of the river. Fishing here is notable for excellent catches of smallmouth bass, pike and brown trout.

One mile below Route 7 bridge, a brook enters, river left. Paddle river right in deeper water as a rocky delta has formed on the left creating shallow water in low flows. From here down to West Cornwall, flatwater gives way to occasional riffles and stretches of quick water. Occasional large boulders dot the river.

You will see several "informal" access sites on fairly steep banks on river left. These are primarily used by fishermen.

Brook Trout

BY DUANE RAVER  
USFWS



### Upper Trout Management Area

The upper Trout Management Area (TMA) of the Housatonic River extends 10 miles from Falls Village to the Route 4 bridge in Cornwall Bridge. This section is managed only as catch-and-release and contains a pool named Push'em Up Hole. The lower three miles to Cornwall Bridge is for fly fishing only. Access to the upper TMA is very good from Route 7.

Another mile and you will pass a small stream, entering river left, the site of “Push’em-up” hole – a renowned fly-fishing spot. Along this section of river notice the prominence of the Housatonic Railroad on the eastern shore (river left). Just below “Push’em-up” hole see another informal access spot, recognizable next to an old crumbling bridge abutment, river left.

Flatwater with riffles and rocks ends at the Covered Bridge, where a 0.25 mile of fast Class II/III rapids begins and should be scouted. Pull off above the rapids river left and walk through town or over the Covered Bridge to get a better view.

The long, red covered bridge in West Cornwall marks the most difficult rapid on this section of the river, and the beginning of one of the most beautiful fastwater paddles anywhere. The best route is just to the right of the center pier, then a fast move to the left shore to the bottom of this 250-yard rapid. In high water, go left of the pier.

The Covered Bridge rapid ends at the Bend, a big eddy on the left just before the river takes a sharp turn to the right. This is a good place to stop and walk up Lower River Road to the restaurants and shops in the picturesque village of West Cornwall.

The Bend is followed by a long, sweeping left turn, followed by a right. Directly ahead is The Ledge, best taken right of center in low/medium flow. At high water, river left is the safer route. Note, Carse Brook enters river right.

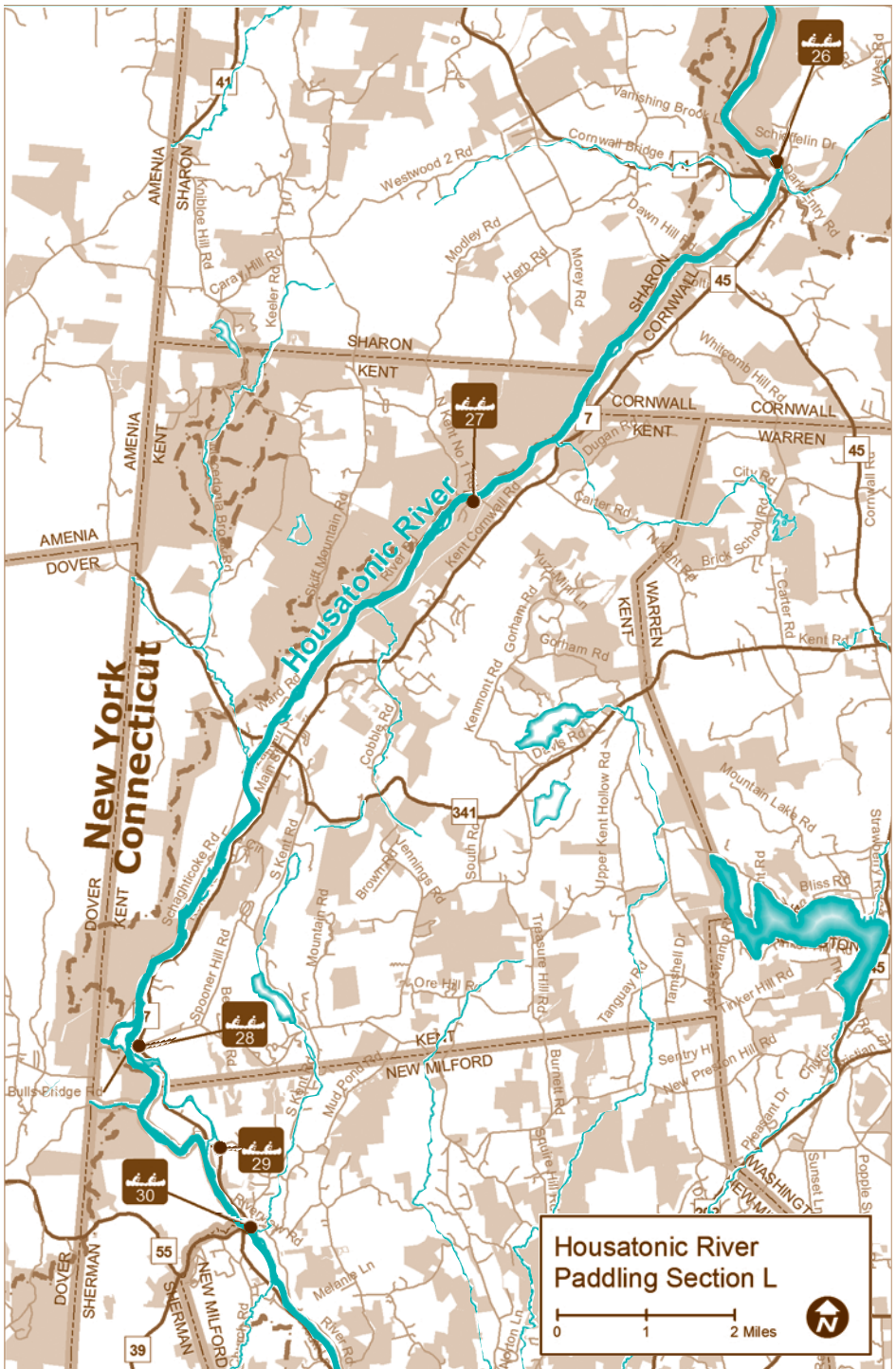
The rest of the run to the take-out is quick water with small standing waves. Generally the best course is right down the middle, although at a rapid just past the Housatonic Meadows State Park campgrounds there is a sneak chute on the right side at Hot Dog Rock, best done by expert, experienced canoeists. After the bend, before the island, keep right to avoid Hamburger Rock river left. Another two left hand bends and the Housatonic Meadows State Park access is river right.



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West Cornwall  
Covered Bridge





## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION L

Housatonic Meadows State Park, Sharon  
to Bull's Bridge, South Kent

**Distance:** 13.1 miles

**Approximate Time:** 4 hours

**Towns:** Sharon/Cornwall Bridge, South Kent

**Tributaries:** None

**Rating:** Technical, whitewater, intermediate whitewater  
experience recommended

### PUT-IN

**Access 26, Housatonic Meadows State Park Picnic Area, Sharon; (N41.823637; W73.37275). Formal access (excellent); limited parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM INTERSECTION OF ROUTES 7 AND 44 IN CANAAN

Travel south on Route 7 for 9.6 miles passing through Canaan, Falls Village, West Cornwall to the Housatonic Meadows State Park picnic area located along Route 7 in the Town of Sharon near the border of Cornwall Bridge. The park is approximately four miles south of the West Cornwall Covered Bridge and is just north of the intersection with Route 4.

**Note:** This is not the first entrance to the park. The first entrance leads to the camping ranger's office and camping sites. At the second entrance, turn left into the park and stay to the right following the paved driveway down to the parking area and boating access ramp.

### ALTERNATIVE ACCESS

**Access 27, Housatonic River Wildlife Management Area, North Kent Road, Kent; (N41.766927; W73.437847). Informal access (difficult, primitive); limited parking. Distance from Put-In at Access 26: 5.5 river miles**

### DIRECTIONS FROM HOUSATONIC MEADOWS STATE PARK IN SHARON

Travel south on Route 7 into Sharon to the junction of Route 4. Bear left and follow routes 7 and 4 over the Housatonic River, then bear right after the bridge to continue south on Route 7 for approximately 5.0 miles. Take a right onto North Kent Road (unpaved), follow the road over the railroad tracks and enter the Housatonic



#### Appalachian Trail Housatonic Riverwalk

At the bend in the river in Sharon, which is the former site of Swift's Bridge, begins a section of the Appalachian Trail. Approximately five miles long, this is the longest riverfront section of the 2,100-mile AT. The trail is for foot travel only; no bikes, ATVs or horses. Backpacker camping only at designated sites. Stove only, no fires. Carry in/carry out. For more information, visit [www.appalachiantrail.org](http://www.appalachiantrail.org).

River Wildlife Management Area. Parking lot is at the end of the road next to the river.

## TAKE-OUT

**Access 28, Bull's Bridge Road, South Kent; (N41.67558; W73.508363). Official access (good with a carry to parking area of approximately 0.3 mile).**

**Distance from put-in at Access 26: 13 river miles**

## DIRECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTES 7 AND 341 IN THE VILLAGE OF KENT

From the traffic light in the center of Kent at the junction of routes 7 and 341, follow Route 7 south for approximately 3.0 miles to a traffic light. Take a right onto Bull's Bridge Road and before going over the covered bridge turn left into the parking lot. The take-out point is on the upstream side of Spooner Island before the dam. Portage is 0.4 miles from the northern tip of the island to Bull's Bridge Road.

## DESCRIPTION

From the put-in at Housatonic Meadows State Park the next 9.0 miles have fast current, many small rapids and in low water may be rocky and difficult or impossible to traverse. This section has some challenges but is not highly technical. Intermediate skill is required.

A short distance after putting in, the river goes through the village of Cornwall Bridge. Notice the train station and Furnace Brook



### Kent Falls

in the northeastern section of Kent, is a series of waterfalls on a mountain stream known as Falls Brook. The stream begins in the town of Warren draining an area of six or seven square miles. It then flows west to the big fall where it plunges approximately 70 feet in a dramatic cascade. From here the stream descends in a series of lesser falls and cascades to the valley, where it enters the Housatonic River about 200 feet below the brink of the big fall only a quarter mile away. Much of the limestone over which the brook flows has been carved into interesting shapes including numerous potholes of all sizes.



entering the river on the left. There are some riffles just before going under the Route 7 bridge. Approximately 1.5 miles into this section just after a big bend to the right is the site of the old Swifts Bridge and the river takes a sharp swing to the left. If the water is running swift, paddlers might want to stop river right just before the bend and walk down the shoreline to scout the rapids. These can be Class III or IV rapids.

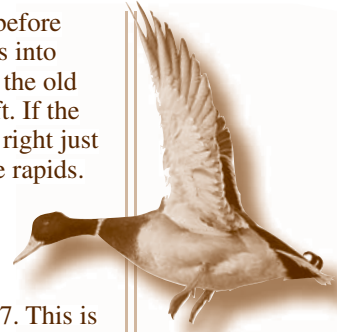
The rest of the way is easy going with occasional short stretches of riffles and rapids, with shallow areas. At mile 4.2 note the culvert river left that runs under Route 7. This is a conduit for Falls Brook coming from Kent Falls State Park.

Mile 5.5 brings the paddler to Alternative Access 27 at the Housatonic River Wildlife Management Area, river left. There are two possible exit points here. Each presents a mild challenge. There is a steep bank to manage at the first exit; and while the second one, just around the bend, offers a sandy beach, there is a long carry-up to the parking area.

In general there are not a lot of specific features throughout this paddle except for trees, water and wildlife. There is little to no development; just the occasional home spotted on the mountainside. Just before entering the village of Kent, the Sloane/Stanley Museum is river left at mile 8.0. During low water, paddlers may have to walk their boats through the rocky area behind the museum. The dirt road river right is River Road.

Kent School, a private, co-educational college preparatory school, owns the docks located under the Route 341 bridge at mile 9.2. The current slows here at the Kent School rowing docks along River Road. This is the head of the Bull's Bridge Dam impoundment, and the next 3.8 miles to Spooner Island and the Bull's Bridge Dam are passable in all seasons and a very pleasant trip. The river meanders through the village of Kent and then straightens out to parallel Route 7 river left and Schaghticoke Road on the right. Note the dramatic rise of Schaghticoke Mountain river right. Herons, kingfishers, mallards, Canada geese, red tail hawks and bald eagles are often spotted feeding along this section.

At the approach to the Bull's Bridge dam area, keep river right. Stay clear of buoys on the left denoting the canal. Stay in the middle of the river and land on the north side of Spooner Island that splits the Housatonic in half. Keep right of Spooner Island, and an improved FirstLight take-out is clearly marked immediately on the left. Carry is 0.4 mile to Bull's Bridge Road. Parking lot is on the right after passing through the covered bridge.



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### Eric Sloane

was a prolific artist, author, illustrator and avid collector of Americana. His extensive collection of hand tools is displayed in the Sloane Stanley Museum, a building that once housed Stanley Works, a Connecticut-based tool manufacturing company. The Kent Iron Furnace, part of the museum, began production of pig iron in 1826 and continued for almost 70 years. The remains of the granite blast furnace with its Gothic arches can be seen just below the museum.

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# Padding Access Sites on the Housatonic River in Connecticut



Kayaker at Great Falls



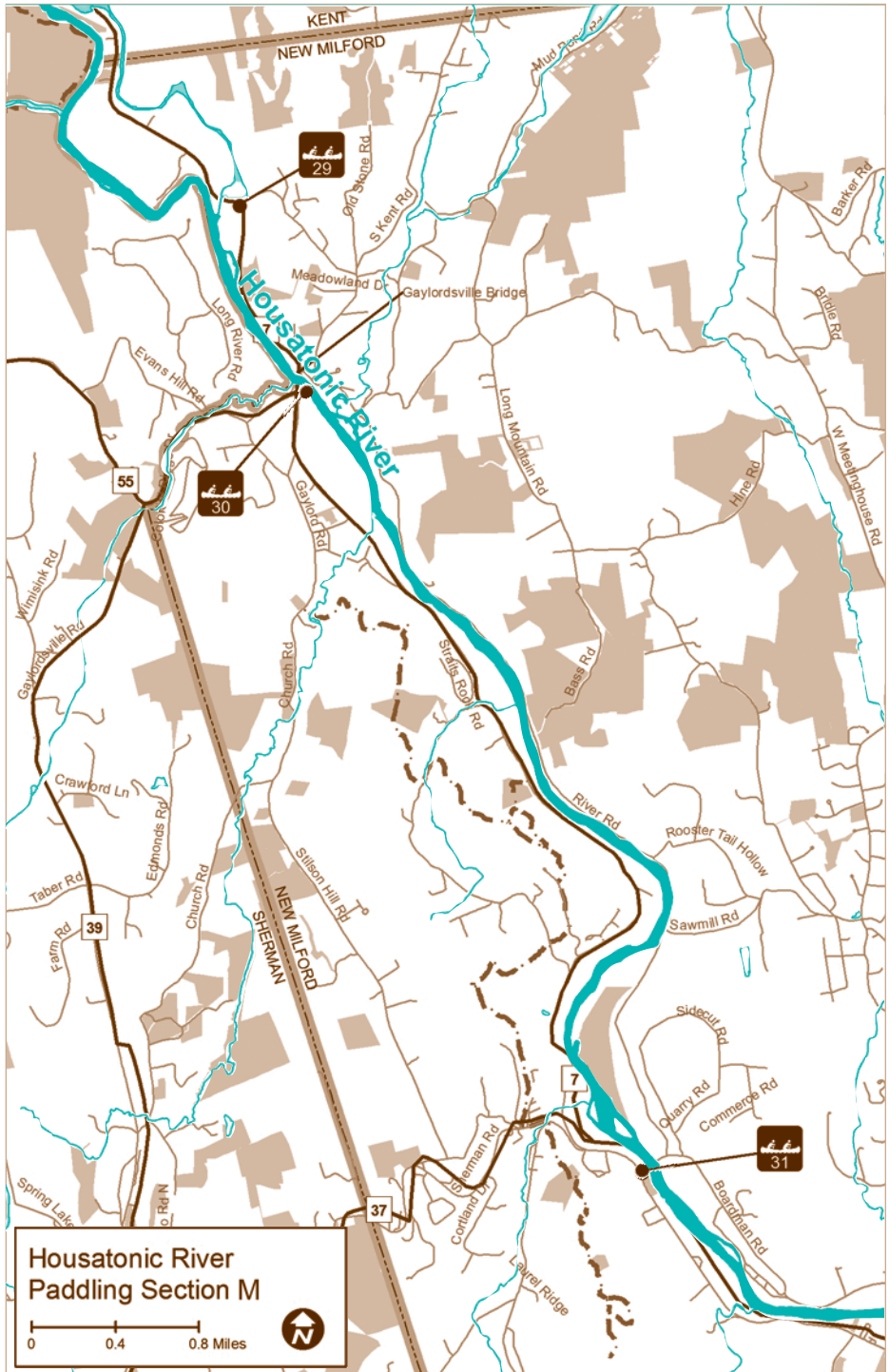
West Cornwall Covered Bridge

**Legend**

- Access Site
- Housatonic River
- River/Stream
- Waterbody
- Interstate or US Hwy
- Town Boundary







## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION M

Bull's Bridge Hydro Station, Gaylordsville to Boardman Bridge, New Milford

**Distance:** 5.3 miles

**Time:** Approximately 2 hours

**Towns:** Kent, New Milford

**Tributaries:** Tenmile River

**Difficulty:** Technical, Whitewater. Whitewater experience recommended



### PUT-IN



**Access 29, Launch below Bull's Bridge Hydro station, 781 Kent Road (Route 7), Gaylordsville; (N41.659597; W73.489931) Formal access, (good)**

### DIRECTIONS FROM ACCESS 28

**(Above Bull's Bridge dam)**

Travel east on Bull's Bridge Road to the signal light at Route 7. Turn right (south) and go 1.6 miles to Bull's Bridge Hydro station driveway on the right. Drive down to parking area. This site has a picnic area and a port-a-potty.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access 30 – Boardman Bridge, New Milford; (N41.592691; W73.450363). Informal access (fair, primitive)**

### DIRECTIONS FROM INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 7 AND BULL'S BRIDGE ROAD IN SOUTH KENT

Travel south on Route 7 for 7.3 miles to Boardman Bridge in New Milford. Put in on the downstream side of the bridge at Andrew Gaylord Barnes Park. Turn left and carefully drive over curb onto field. Put-in is a short but steep river bank that presents a mild challenge, particularly in wet weather. Park on either the side of the field or next to the old Boardman Bridge (historic lentic structure) just north of the current Boardman Bridge on Route 7. This paved area has several parking spaces. The park, maintained by the



### Bull's Bridge, Kent

Spanning the Housatonic River in Kent, Bull's Bridge dates to about 1842. The bridge is named for Jacob and Isaac Bull who started an ironworks at the site in 1760. The lattice truss design single lane bridge is approximately 110 feet long.



Kent School girls  
“eight” crews on  
the Housatonic  
in Kent.

Beaver

PEARSON SCOTT  
FORESMAN  
ILLUSTRATION



### Bank Beavers

live on a river and make their home in a riverbank burrow with an underwater entrance. Beavers that live in quiet streams, lakes, and ponds build lodges and dams. By building dams and flooding areas, beavers create important and necessary wetland habitat for a variety of wildlife, including moose, otter, and mink.

Town of New Milford Parks and Recreation Department, has one picnic table near the put-in.

**NOTE:** Parking at any New Milford town park requires a valid park sticker or day pass which can be obtained at the New Milford Parks & Recreation Department, 47 Bridge Street, New Milford, 860-355-6050; 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, [newmilford.org/content/57/101/default.aspx](http://newmilford.org/content/57/101/default.aspx). A day-pass sticker (available to non-residents, too) can be purchased in advance to use on a weekend.

### DESCRIPTION

**WARNING:** Just below the Bull’s Bridge Dam are technical rapids (whitewater paddling). This section should **ONLY** be attempted by highly skilled paddlers in a decked boat.

Nearly 0.5 mile after the FirstLight Power Station put-in is a large ledge across the entire river. In high water (Class IV), it is possible to take it on the left, back-paddling steadily. In high or medium water (Class III), it is advisable to run river left, but care must be exercised and scouting is essential. In low water, it is a rock garden and you may have to carry your boat.

Another 200 yards downriver is the Gaylordsville Bridge at the intersection with Route 55. This section can be tricky and is best taken on the right and one must stay there for the ensuing 100 yards. Various take-outs are available on the right during the last 75 yards of this rapid.

The rest of the run to Boardman Bridge is gentle Class I water, alternating with flatwater.

In just under 1.0 mile from the launch, pass under the Route 7 Bridge in Gaylordsville. Alternative Access 30 is river right, just past the bridge. This is an easier launch site for those who want to avoid the Class II and Class III waters upstream.

Just 0.19 mile into this section is an island river left; stay river right. At about mile 0.88, notice a dirt road on the left. This is River Road and it follows the river all the way down to Boardman Bridge with Route 7 on the right.

A little over 2.5 miles along this section is a rocky area. At the end of a 0.5-mile long bend to the east is another set of rocks to get through.

Two more islands are reached in another 0.5 mile and can usually be taken on either side of the river. From this to the next island is less than 0.5 mile. If paddling in low water, it is easiest to get around this island river right. From the southern tip of the island to the take-out at Boardman Bridge (river right) is less than 0.25 mile.

## ALTERNATIVE ACCESS



**Access 30: (N41.65854; W73.49198); Paddlers wishing to avoid Class II and III whitewater below the Bull's Bridge Dam (access 29) may choose to launch here. (Caution: immediately upon launching, there is a short stretch of Class II then flatwater, Class 1, all the way to Boardman Bridge.)**

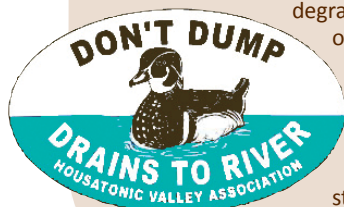
## DIRECTIONS

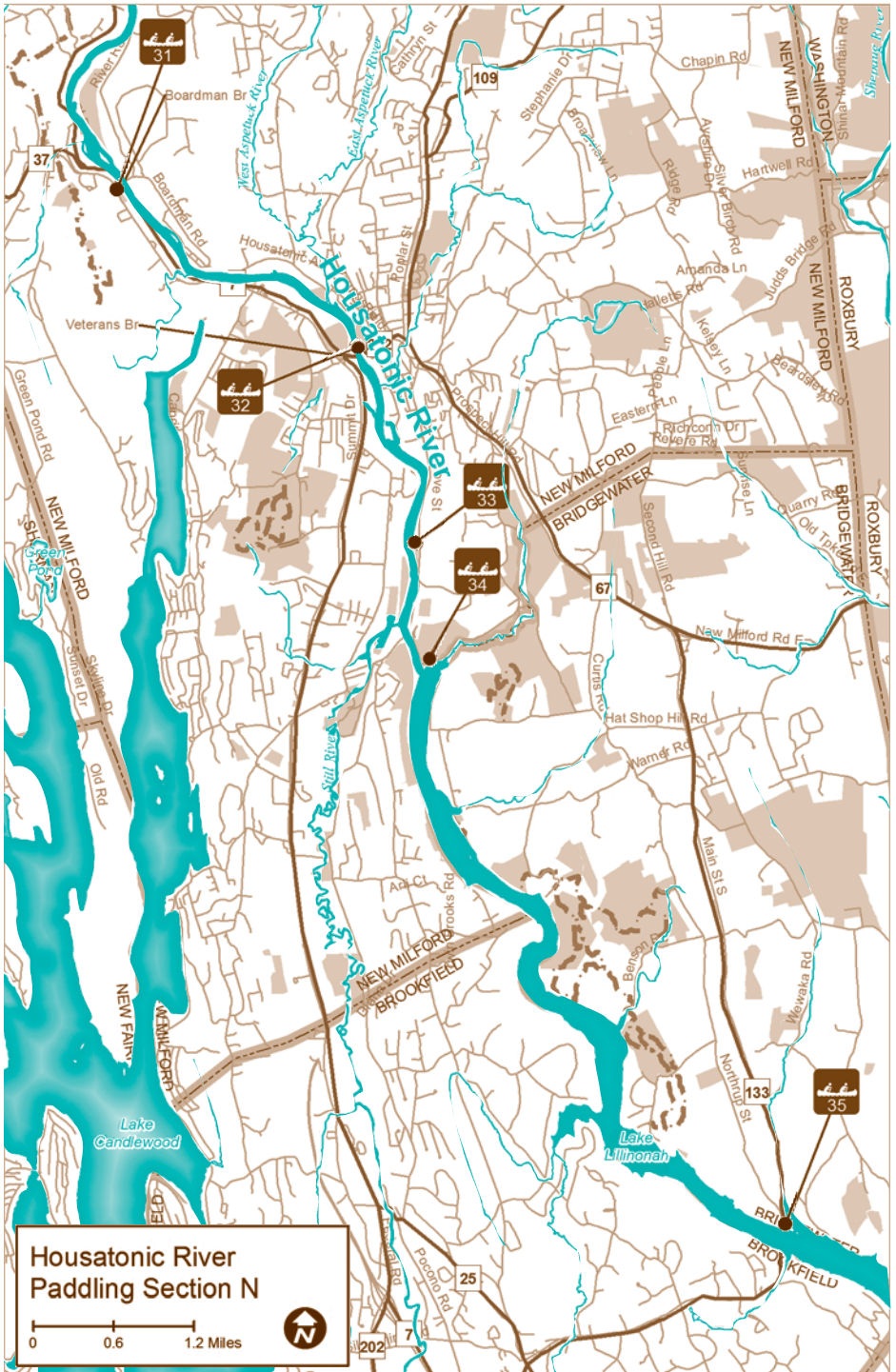
Gaylordsville Route 7 Bridge – traveling south on route 7, turn left immediately after crossing Gaylordsville Bridge. Go down steep grade to parking and primitive put-in on west bank of the river.



### Storm Drains lead to the River!

When the rain pours, stormwater runs off of impervious surfaces (parking lots, sidewalks, driveways, etc.) picking up contaminants such as motor oil, animal waste, excess fertilizer and pesticides, road salt and more. To prevent flooding, stormwater drains away via storm drains which lead straight to the nearest water body, which could be a river, stream, or even pond or lake. You may encounter drainage pipes leading into the river. Stormwater is the greatest contributor to the degradation of the water quality of our nation's water bodies. Visit EPA's Stormwater Web site for more information: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/>. Also check out <http://www.hvatoday.org/show.cfm?page=water/stormdrainmain.htm>.





**Housatonic River Paddling Section N**

0 0.6 1.2 Miles

202 7



## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION N

Boardman Bridge, New Milford to Route 133  
State Boat Launch, Bridgewater.

**Distance:** 10.73 miles

**Time:** 4–5 hours

**Towns:** New Milford, Bridgewater

**Tributaries:** Still River, Aspetuck River

**Difficulty:** Flatwater, one portage

### PUT-IN



**Access 31 – Boardman Bridge, New Milford;**  
**(N41.592691; W73.450363). Official access (fair, primitive)**

### DIRECTIONS FROM INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 7 AND BULL'S BRIDGE ROAD IN SOUTH KENT.

Travel south on Route 7 for 7.3 miles to Boardman Bridge in New Milford. Turn left just past the bridge into Andrew Gaylord Barns Park. Unload and park either along the side of the grassy area or in the paved area in front of the Boardman Bridge, an historic lenticular structure, just north of the current bridge. There is a waterside picnic table but no other facilities. Put-in is a short but steep river bank that presents a mild challenge, particularly in wet weather.

The park is maintained by the Town of New Milford.

**NOTE:** Parking at any New Milford town park requires a valid park sticker or day pass which can be obtained at the New Milford Parks & Recreation Department, 47 Bridge Street, New Milford, 860-355-6050 – 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday, [newmilford.org/content/57/101/default.aspx](http://newmilford.org/content/57/101/default.aspx). A day pass sticker (available to nonresidents, too) can be purchased in advance to use on a weekend.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access 35, State boat launch, Route 133 Bridge,**  
**Bridgewater; (N41.480981, W73.35037)**  
**Formal access, (Excellent, developed)**


### DIRECTIONS FROM INTERSECTION ROUTE 7 AND BOARDMAN BRIDGE IN NEW MILFORD

Travel south on Route 7 for 2.2 miles to the traffic light at Veterans Bridge. Turn left to cross the bridge

This Paddle Guide, the Berkshire Paddle Guide and the individual section maps are available at [www.hvatoday.org/PaddleGuide.htm](http://www.hvatoday.org/PaddleGuide.htm).

White-Tailed Deer  
JERRY SEGRAVES PHOTO





(Route 202E/Bridge Street) and go straight on Bridge Street going past three traffic lights and the Village Green to intersection with routes 202 and 67. Travel straight through the light to Route 67E toward Bridgewater. At 3.5 miles, take right onto Route 133 and follow through the village of Bridgewater. State boat launch is on the left just before the bridge.

### DESCRIPTION

Easy, lake paddling. The paddling distance from Boardman Bridge to Young's Field Road (Access 32) at Veterans Bridge is 2.42 miles. About half way between the two points, the Rocky River hydroelectric station, a national historical mechanical engineering landmark, sits on the west bank (river right). In dry season, just south of the power plant, the water can become very shallow.

A short way south of here, the Aspetuck River feeds in from river left. In the wet season, this section of the Aspetuck is navigable for about 0.33 to 0.5 mile.


The town of New Milford installed an access on the north side of the Veterans Bridge (river left). See more information about Access 32 further on.



### Lover's Leap State Park

Lover's Leap is a walk-in park with hiking trails, scenic vistas and historic ruins. The 160-acre park is divided into three sections, each featuring a different appreciation for the park history. Trails through the park lead through centuries of land-use history. Heading northeast from the parking lot the trail uses the 1895 Berlin Iron Bridge, one of five remaining in Connecticut, to cross the Housatonic River. Across the bridge, the Lovers Leap Trail heads southeast 1,200 feet to the rock formation that gives the park its name.

A thriving community of Native Americans occupied this strategic site for more than 8,000 years. Its location and elevation allowed for observation and signaling over great distances. The fertile fields of the river valley, and the abundance of game and migration of salmon, shad, eel and other fish from Long Island Sound up to the "Great Falls" assured a reliable food source. The Great Falls blocked the passage of shad from migrating further up river.



At 0.5 mile below Veterans Bridge, boaters must portage around the Bleachery Dam. Pull river left approximately 75 yards above the dam. Carry boat over the neck of land and launch into the backwater and paddle back into the river.

Lake Lillinonah begins south of the Bleachery Dam. Part of the Housatonic River, this 1,547-acre lake is Connecticut's second largest and is surrounded by rolling hills. The lake lies between the Bleachery Dam, at the north, and the Shepaug Dam at the south.

A leisurely paddle (just under 1.0 mile) to Addis Park (river left) which is 0.7 mile north of the mouth of the Still River, river right, and the Lover's Leap Gorge on the left. A side trip up the Still is worth the time. A short trip brings the paddler to the falls in Harrybrooke Park, a private park held in trust for the residents of New Milford. A word of warning – just up from the mouth of the Still River, a pair of swans is usually in residence. Be respectful of their turf; the gander can be quite aggressive to paddlers when his cygnets are swimming in the area.

The high canyon walls of Lover's Leap Gorge make for a unique paddling experience. Before the construction of the Shepaug Dam and creation of Lake Lillinonah, salmon, shad, eel and other anadromous fish migrated from Long Island Sound up to this point. The Great Falls now lie 14 feet below the water's surface. At the south end of the gorge are the town of Bridgewater, river left and New Milford, river right. About 2.0 miles downstream the town of Brookfield is river right.

The scenery along the next 5.79 miles of paddling is beautiful. Lake Lillinonah's shoreline is primarily wooded. The lake ranks as one of Connecticut's premier fishing lakes with excellent bass fishing. The area is also popular with water skiers; hence it is a busy waterway.

The State Boat Ramp on Route 133 in Bridgewater, river left, is well marked from adjacent Route 133. It has a large and very active ramp primarily for fishing and powerboats. It may be most suitable for small craft launching on weekday mornings. The parking is crowded on weekends, with a lot of traffic in the parking lot and on Lake Lillinonah. The paddle distance from this boat ramp downstream to the portage at the Shepaug Dam is 4.07 miles.

### **Bridgeport Wood Finishing Company**



The ruins of the Bridgeport Wood Finishing Company (1882 to 1927), whose grinding wheels were once powered by the mighty Housatonic River, are located in Lover's Leap State Park. It is one of only 16 of Connecticut's "State Archaeological Preserves" and is listed on the State Register of Historic Places as an early manufacturing site. If one is agile enough, it is possible to paddle to an old factory retaining wall at the mouth of the Still River and climb up to the ruins. Park access is on Grove Street off Route 67 in New Milford.

## ALTERNATIVE PUT-INS



**Access 32, Young's Field, New Milford; (N41.576082; W73.415271); Official car-top boating access (excellent, developed).**

This access is a 2.42-mile paddle south of Boardman Bridge.

Parking is available along Young's Field Road. Put-in is a handicapped accessible canoe/kayak ramp across Young's Field Road from the playground and ball fields. In the summer season, a port-a-potty is stationed at the south end of the playground near the tennis courts. Please note: this is a town park and rules described earlier in this section apply.

### Young's Field Ramp

was installed in three days over two July weekends in 2002. About 730 hours of volunteer time was donated to install the ramp by 46 volunteers. Organization was by the King's Mark Earth Team Volunteer program.

## DIRECTIONS FROM INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 7 AND BOARDMAN BRIDGE IN NEW MILFORD

Travel south on Route 7 approximately 2.3 miles to traffic light at Veterans Bridge. Turn left over the bridge and take the first left onto Young's Field Road. The ramp is on the immediate left. Plenty of parking is available on the river side of the road as well as across the street, except during soft ball and/or soccer season. Parking on the east side of Young's Field may be less open then.

Paddlers on the Housatonic in New Milford.

## ALTERNATIVE ACCESS



**Access 33: Addis Park, Grove Street, New Milford; (N41.554709; W73.40605); Official access (excellent, developed).**

Addis Park is 0.93 miles from the Bleachery Dam river left. This picnic area, with a boat launch ramp, opens one half hour before sunrise and closes one half hour after sunset (except access to boat launch). Parking for a dozen vehicles/trailers maximum. A valid town park sticker or day pass is required.

## DIRECTIONS FROM BOARDMAN BRIDGE, ROUTE 7, NEW MILFORD

Travel south on Route 7 for 1.9 miles. Turn left onto Veterans Bridge, Route 202E/Bridge Street. Stay on Bridge Street through three



traffic lights and take a right turn onto Grove Street at the fourth light. In approximately 2.5 miles, Addis Park is on the right.

## ALTERNATIVE ACCESS



**Access 34: Lover's Leap State Boat Ramp, Lover's Leap Road, New Milford; (N41.542168; W73.403553)  
Official access (fair, primitive)**

## DIRECTIONS FROM VETERANS BRIDGE, ROUTE 7S, NEW MILFORD

Travel south on Route 7 for 3.3 miles. Take a left onto Veterans Bridge (Route 202E/Bridge Street) and stay on Bridge Street through three traffic lights and go straight on Route 67. Turn right onto Town Farm Road, at bottom of a short hill turn left to stay on Town Farm Road. At the entrance to Clatter Valley Park, stay right onto Lover's Leap Road. A short drive up to the right brings one to a dead end. There is room for only about four vehicles at the top of the ramp.

A steep, sometimes eroded, dirt driveway leads to Lake Lillinonah. It is not suitable for low-ground clearance vehicles. Approximately 100 yards to the bottom one finds an easy, level put-in just behind the entrance from Lover's Leap Gorge into the Bridgewater/Brookfield region of the lake.



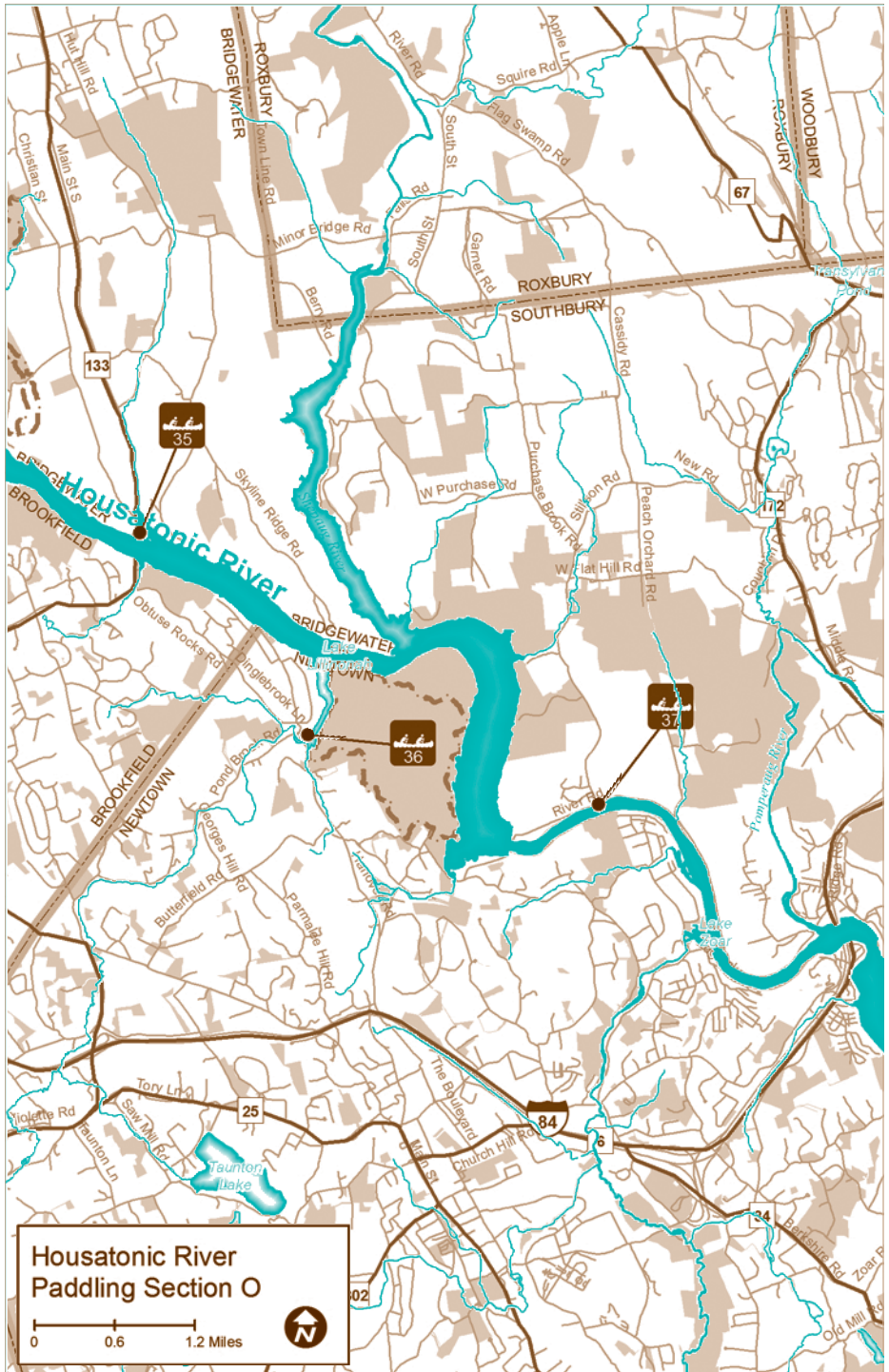
### Look out for the Wood Turtle!

A medium-sized turtle, it has a mostly black head with orange color on its legs and neck and a brown, sculpted upper shell or plastron.

Wood turtles require clean rivers and large streams with deeply undercut banks for hibernation, as well as extensive areas of floodplain, forest, and fields for summer foraging. Be sure to leave it alone. In Connecticut, the wood turtle is listed as a species of special concern at risk of becoming threatened.



**1895  
Berlin  
Iron  
Bridge  
crossing  
Lover's  
Leap  
gorge**



**Housatonic River  
Paddling Section O**

0 0.6 1.2 Miles

## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION O

Route 133 State Boat Launch, Bridgewater to Shepaug Dam Portage, Southbury

**Distance:** 4.07 miles

**Time:** 2 hours

**Towns:** Bridgewater, Brookfield, Roxbury, Newtown, Southbury

**Tributaries:** Shepaug

**Difficulty:** Flatwater

### PUT-IN



**Access 35, Route 133 State Boat Launch, Bridgewater; (N41.480981, W73.35037)**

**Formal access, (Excellent, developed)**

### DIRECTIONS FROM INTERSECTION ROUTE 7 AND BOARDMAN BRIDGE IN NEW MILFORD

Travel south on Route 7 for 2.2 miles to traffic light at Veterans Bridge. Turn left to cross the bridge (Route 202E/Bridge Street) and go straight on Bridge Street going past three traffic lights and the Village Green to intersection with routes 202 and 67. Go straight through light to Route 67E toward Bridgewater.

At 3.5 miles, take right onto Route 133 and follow through the village of Bridgewater. State boat launch is on the left just before the bridge.

### ALTERNATIVE DIRECTIONS FROM INTERSECTION ROUTE 7/202 AND ROUTE 25/WHISCONIER ROAD IN BROOKFIELD

Driving distance: approximately 4.0 miles. Take Route 25/Whisconier Road east toward Brookfield Center. Turn left onto Route 133 at traffic light. Stay on Route 133 for about 2.5 miles, crossing bridge over Lake Lillinonah. State boat launch is immediately after the bridge on the right

### TAKE-OUT



**Access 37, Shepaug Dam western portage, Southbury; (N41.450266; W73.295404) Vehicular access is from River Road in Southbury, with the Shepaug Dam being at the western “dead end” of that town road.**

Bald Eagle  
GARY ROTHSTEIN PHOTO



### Shepaug Dam Eagle Viewing Facility

The environment in the vicinity of this largest hydroelectric station in Connecticut provides a unique habitat for wildlife and is an important winter feeding site for bald eagles. The movement of water below the dam prevents ice from forming so there's always access to an abundance of fish upon which the eagles may feed. Reservations to visit the controlled Eagle Observation Area are required – call

**1-800-368-8954.**

The area is open only on certain dates from December to March. Tours of the station are available year-round for people 12 and older. Call 1-800-286-5000 and ask for Norwalk extension 3463.



Joseph Ruggiero, HVA Source-to-Sound paddler from Southbury, Connecticut.

## DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 133 STATE BOAT RAMP IN BRIDGEWATER VIA OBTUSE ROCKS ROAD TO SOUTHBURY

Drive east on Route 133 across the bridge into Brookfield. Take the first left onto Obtuse Rocks Road. After 1.0 mile the road becomes Dinglebrook in Newtown. In 0.7 mile, take a slight right onto Hanover Road and stay on this for 2.3 miles then continue onto The Boulevard. In 0.6 mile, turn left to stay on The Boulevard. Travel 0.7 mile and then turn left onto Church Hill Road and follow this for 1.1 miles. Turn left onto Glen Road, go over the bridge then turn left onto River Road. Drive 2.8 miles to the Shepaug Dam Recreation Area.

## DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 84

**Westbound:** Take Exit 14 (Route 172) in Southbury. Turn right off exit ramp and left at stoplight. Proceed straight for 1.0 mile, turn left (over the highway) and immediately right onto Fish Rock Road for 0.6 mile.

**Eastbound:** Take Exit 13 (River Road). Turn right off exit ramp. Both routes now merge, and you should keep right on River Road and continue for 3.2 miles to the Shepaug Dam Recreation Area. The river will be on your left.

## SPECIAL CONDITIONS

At the Shepaug Dam Recreation Area, the riverside park below the dam is open from 8 a.m. to sunset from Memorial Day to Labor Day. While access to the canoe portage is available year-round, the gate to the park and walking trail, and thus the parking lot, is only open in season.

## DESCRIPTION

Paddling here is all flatwater. However, this section of Lake Lillinonah is quite active with motor boats and water skiers. Exercise caution! An alternative put-in at Pond Brook Inlet State Boat Launch in Newtown affords a quieter place to begin a paddle of Lake Lillinonah. (Directions below.) This is an easy put-in; it is an ideal place for beginning paddlers to test their skills. The distance out to Lake Lillinonah is approximately 0.33 mile. The brook has very quiet water that also offers some excellent bass fishing.

The Upper Paugussett State Forest, which offers a great six-mile round trip hike, is nestled here along the banks of Lake Lillinonah. Follow the inlet out to the Lake. About 0.3 mile south, the Shepaug River enters river left. A trip up the Shepaug River is well worth the paddler's time. It is navigable for 3.5 miles up to the falls and offers several delightful picnic spots along the way.



The Lake to this point has been flowing in a generally southeast direction. At the mouth of the Shepaug River, the lake takes a sharp swing to the south to the Shepaug Dam portage, a paddling distance of about 1.66 miles.

The portage is about 0.3 mile and is well marked all along the path with flatwater at either end. Note that this portage leads from Lake Lillinonah down the slope to Lake Zoar. This is a safe place for paddlers to access and exit the two lakes whether the dam is generating power or not. The bank is gradual and an easy place to put in or take out. Traveling in a southerly direction with the current, signs are located along the easterly trail to Lake Zoar.

Traveling down river, the portage will be on river left and is marked with Canoe Portage Trail signs. Paddling up river, non-motorized boats have permission to go approximately 150 yards beyond the NO BOATING sign overhead near the west bank (river right, in this case) to reach the portage.

Planned releases no longer occur, but if one was to become necessary, a siren will sound a warning. Paddlers must heed these warnings as the water may have significant currents during periods of water discharge.

## SPECIAL CONDITIONS

At the Shepaug Dam Recreation Area, the riverside park below the dam is open from 8 a.m. to sunset from Memorial Day to Labor Day. While access to the canoe portage is available year round, the gate to the park and walking trail, and thus the parking lot, is only open in season.

## ALTERNATIVE PUT-IN/TAKE-OUT



**Access 36, Pond Brook Inlet State Boat Ramp, Newtown; (N41.459412; W73.325361) Official access (developed, excellent)**

## DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 133 STATE BOAT LAUNCH, BRIDGEWATER

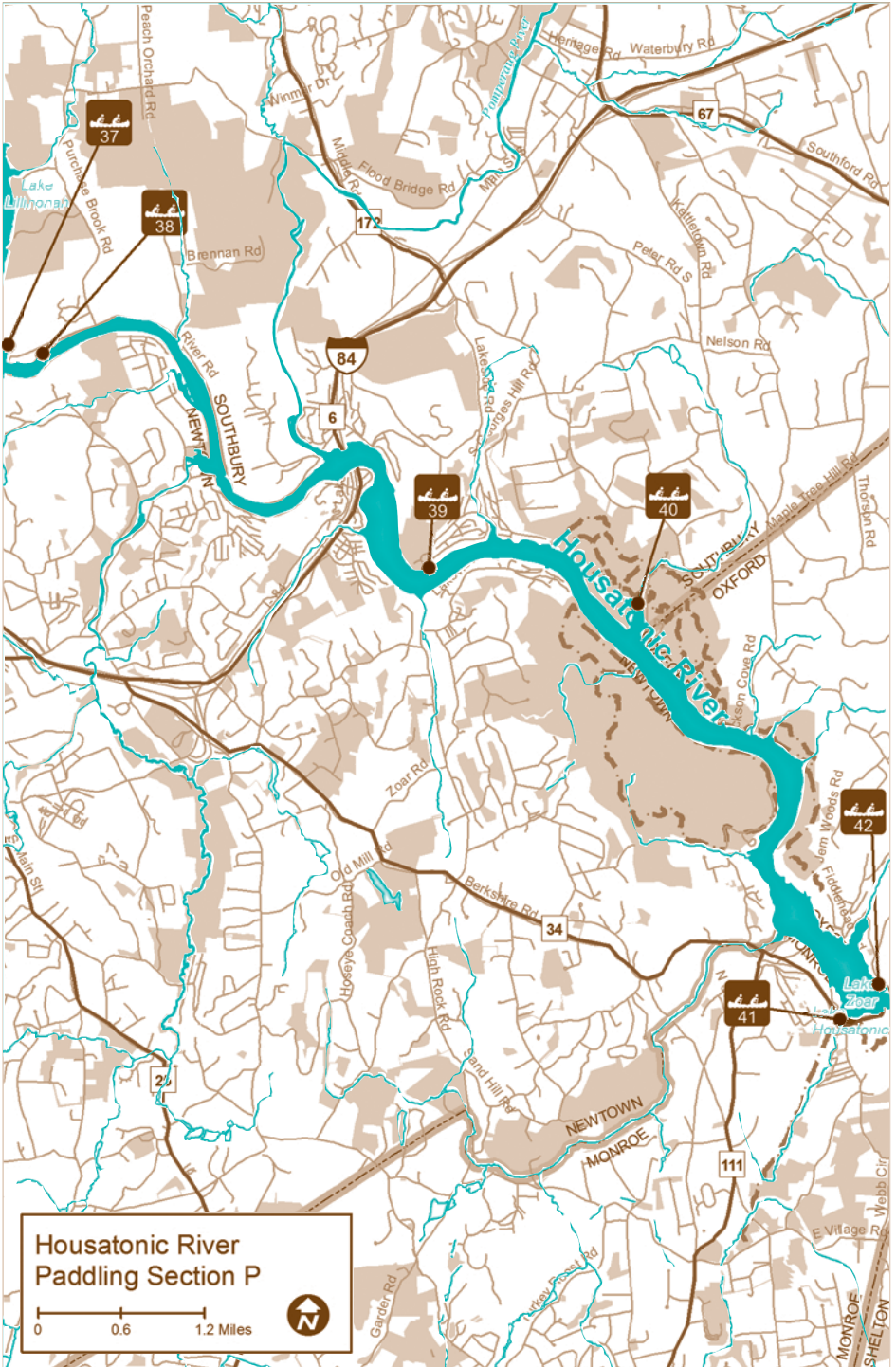
Drive east on Route 133 over the bridge into Brookfield. At mile 0.5, take the first left turn onto Obtuse Rocks Road. In one mile the road becomes Dinglebrook in Newtown. Watch for boating ramp signs. In 0.7 mile, arrive at the intersection with Hanover Road coming in from the left and Lake Road to the right of that. Take the extreme right turn to continue on Hanover Road. After passing Pond Brook Road on the right, Pond Brook Inlet state boat launch will be on the left. Paddling distance from Route 133 Bridge to Pond Brook: 1.48 miles. This is a well-maintained and paved state boat ramp with a large gravel and grass parking area and a port-a-potty on site.

Wood Duck  
BY B.S. THURNER HOF



## Wood Duck

Look for the very colorful Wood Duck that nests in tree cavities. To provide more nesting areas, many nest boxes that mimic tree cavities have been installed in wetlands. Soon after hatching, the ducklings jump down from the nest tree (or box!) and make their way to water and the protection of the parent. Ducklings have been known to jump from heights of 290 feet without injury. At two or three days old, they are able to swim and find food.



## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION P

Lake Zoar, (Downstream of Shepaug Dam) to  
Stevenson Dam, Oxford

**Distance:** 9.6 miles

**Time:** 4.5 hours

**Towns:** Southbury, Oxford, Newtown, Monroe

**Tributaries:** Tributaries: Pootatuck River (Newtown), Pomperaug River (Southbury), Halfway River (Monroe)

**Difficulty:** Class I near Shepaug Dam, otherwise flatwater paddling

### PUT-IN



**Access 38, Shepaug Recreation Area on east (Southbury) side of Lake Zoar, (N41.450266; W3.290666), below Shepaug Dam. Formal access, (Good)**

### DIRECTIONS FROM FROM ROUTE 84

Take Exit 14 on I-84 to Route 172, north. First traffic light is South Main St., go west. Travel 0.8 mile, crossing back over I-84 and take a right turn at stop onto Fish Rock Rd. Follow Fish Rock Rd, which turns into River Road as it crosses back over I-84 again. Continue for 1.1 miles until River Road bears right; do not go over Steel Bridge into Newtown. Travel an additional 2.0 miles to put-in location. The area is accessible from 8 a.m. to Sunset, Memorial Day to Labor Day (Free Access).

### TAKE-OUT



**Access 41 is the Lake Zoar Boat Ramp in Monroe west (river right) of Stevenson Dam, Route 34; (N41.381521; W73.175991). A portage is available to access Lake Housatonic south of the boat launch on the same side at the base of the dam which is also where the parking area is located.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 84

Take Exit 11 on I-84 to Route 34 south. Travel 6.0 miles on Route 34. Lake Zoar Boat Launch is on the left 0.1 mile before it crosses over the Stephenson Dam in Monroe on the left side of the road.

### Baltimore Orioles

In spring, look for a flash of bright orange and the lilting song of the Baltimore oriole flitting around in the tall trees next to the river. These migratory birds prefer tall trees in open areas and are seen along many stretches of the Housatonic.



Baltimore Oriole  
LAURA GOOCH PHOTO



### Beaver or Muskrat?

While they are related (both are rodents), the muskrat is much smaller than the beaver. Still it can be difficult to distinguish between the two when they are swimming in the river. For the most part, if it is a beaver, only the head will be visible above the water. If it is a muskrat, usually both the head and the back of the muskrat are visible as it swims more at the surface. Both make their home in the water and are active in winter. Unlike beavers, muskrats don't store food and must find vegetation to feed on throughout the year.

### DESCRIPTION

This section of the river, called Lake Zoar, has existed since 1917 with the creation of the Stevenson Dam. It passes many small vacation homes and summer communities situated along the lake built after that time.

At the put-in, the river can sometimes be swift if water is being discharged from the dam. Even if the water is swift, the current subsides within a mile downstream. At this point the river meanders to the northeast slightly and then turns back to an almost southerly direction.

At just over 2.2 miles one arrives at the Steel Bridge carrying Glen Road between Southbury and Newtown. Just north of the bridge enters the Pootatuck river, river right. Bald eagles have been known to hunt in the small cove where the river enters and can sometimes be seen perched in the trees nearby.

Slightly further on pass two large stone piers that held a large trestle that carried the New York and New England railroad line between Brewster, New York and Waterbury. The rail line and trestle structure were abandoned in 1939.

In another mile cross under the dual-span Rochambeau Bridge that carries Interstate 84 between Newtown and Southbury, one of only three times on the Housatonic where an Interstate highway crosses the river. Just before the bridge, the Pomperaug River enters river left. At the confluence of the rivers the Town of Southbury maintains its only public beach.

Further down river, at 4.4 miles (almost the mid-point of the trip) is Access 39, the Lake Zoar State Boat Ramp on Scout Road.

From here to the Stevenson Dam is 5.0 miles. Exercise caution during the summer months as this section of the lake can be quite busy with boat traffic. Kettletown State Park lies another 1.9 miles beyond the boat ramp and can be used as another access if needed (see Access 40 description below.) From here to the Stevenson Dam is 3.5 miles.



Muskrat  
HENRI SIVONEN PHOTO

About one-third of this section of the river is bounded by protected open space as it traverses the towns of Newtown and Southbury. The Lake Zoar Wildlife Area and Kettletown State Park provide serene settings on the east side of the river and the Paugussett State Forest, with at least three visible waterfalls emptying into the lake, borders the west side of the river, river left.

After Kettletown Park, Jackson Cove Park in Oxford (maintained by the Town of Oxford for its residents) appears further on, river left. Just after another mile the Halfway River empties into the lake on river left in Eichlers Cove in Monroe where a small marina is located.

One more 1.3 mile stretch and the take-out, which is the Lake Zoar Boat Ramp in Monroe, is river right.

### ALTERNATIVE ACCESS



**Access 39, Lake Zoar State Boat Launch, Southbury; (N41.427675; W73.236135); Formal access, (Developed, excellent)**

### DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 84 IN SOUTHBURY

From I-84 take exit 14 in Southbury to CT-172, traveling south for a short distance. Bear right onto Lakeside Road, watching for signs leading to the boat ramp. Continue for 1.4 miles until a slight right turn onto Lee Farm Drive. Continue for 0.2 miles and make a slight right onto Scout Road. Follow this for 0.6 more miles until its end, which is the boat ramp area.

**Access 40, Kettletown State Park, Southbury; (N41.424513; W73.206974); Official access, (Good)**

### DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 84 IN SOUTHBURY

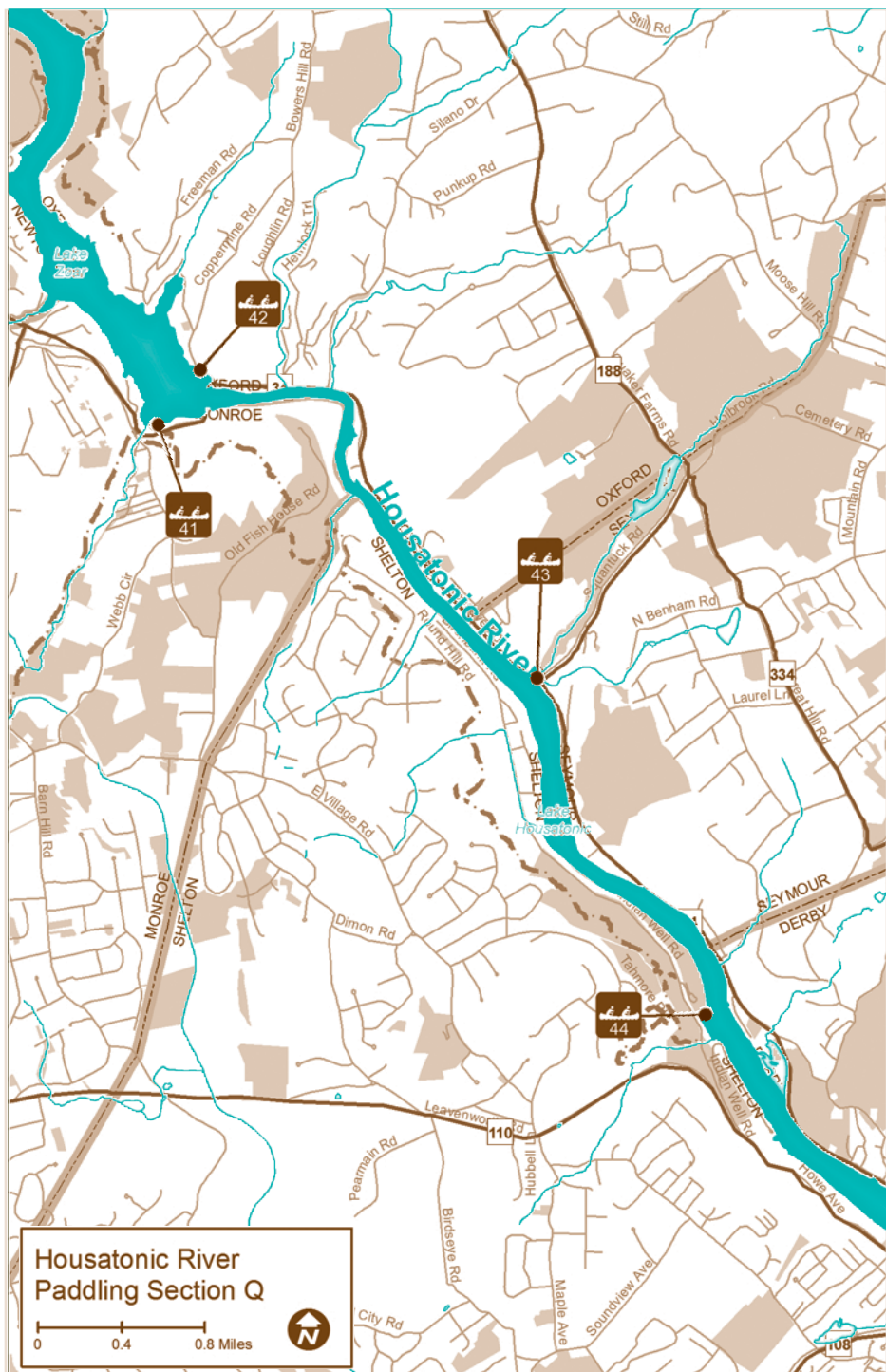
Take I-84 to exit 14 in Southbury to CT-172 south for a short distance. Bear left (uphill) onto Georges Hill Road. Continue for 2.7 miles. Turn right into Kettletown State Park entrance. Canoe/kayak launching is accessible from dawn to dusk. The lake is accessible at the park cove beach area in another 0.6 miles. There are fees to use the park during the summer months.



USGS PHOTO

#### The Zebra Mussel,

an aquatic invasive species, was found in the Housatonic River watershed in East and West Twin Lake in Salisbury, Connecticut in 1998, and then observed in 2009 in Laurel Lake in Lee, Massachusetts. They have since been found in Lake Lillinonah and Lake Zoar in Connecticut in 2011. Since these mussels dominate any area they inhabit, and there is no known method to eradicate them, efforts must be made to stop their spread. Boats must be decontaminated after paddling in the Housatonic! Instructions are on page 10.



## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION Q

Stevenson Dam, Oxford to Indian Well  
State Park, Shelton

**Distance:** 7 miles

**Time:** 4 hours

**Towns:** Oxford, Monroe, Seymour, Derby, Shelton

**Tributaries:** Four Mile Brook (Seymour), Round Hill Brook  
(Monroe)

**Difficulty:** Class I/II near Stevenson Dam, otherwise flatwater  
paddling

### PUT-IN



**Access 42, Stevenson Dam, Oxford; (N41.38509;  
W73.172298); Official access, (Good)**

Access is located at the Stevenson Hydro Station just below the dam. Parking area is riverside with a short walk down a paved driveway to the put-in.

### DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 84

Take Exit 11 on I-84 to Route 34 south. Travel about 6.0 miles on Route 34. At the Stevenson Dam, instead of going across the dam, take a right and follow the hydro station access road down to parking area.

### DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 8 NORTH OF OXFORD

Take Route 8 south to Exit 15 onto Route 34 west. Travel 7.1 miles to the Stevenson Dam Bridge. Cross over the dam and take an immediate left. Follow the hydro station access road down to the access at the base of the dam.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access 44 is Indian Well State Park, Shelton;  
(N41.341098; W73.123702); Formal access, (excellent)**

### DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 8 NORTH OF DERBY

Indian Well State Park is located halfway between Stevenson Dam and Derby Dam, 3.0 miles from either dam. Take Route 8 to Exit 14, Route 110 (Howe Avenue) north. Travel 2.2 miles; park access road entrance is on the right (a large sign indicates the park). Continue 0.7 miles to the entrance to the park proper, cross railroad tracks and continue to main park gatehouse. The

Stinging Nettle  
UWE H. FRIESE PHOTO



### STINGING NETTLE

Watch out for stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica* and the closely related *Urtica urens*). The fine hairs of its leaves and stems contain chemicals that are released when the plant touches your skin. The hairs, or spines, are also painful to the touch. Applying water to the affected area lessens the sting, as does the moisture from the jewelweed plant.



Jewelweed  
D. GORDON E.  
ROBERTSON PHOTO

boat ramp is located just past the gatehouse on the southern-most section of the park. There are fees to use this park during the summer season. Boat launch hours are 8 a.m. to sunset.

## DESCRIPTION

Lake Housatonic was created in 1870 with the construction of the Derby Dam. It has been a recreation mecca since that time.

Newspaper articles dating back to 1906 extol the virtues of boating and vacationing on this venerable lake when the many factories in the lower valley shut down for the summer months.

As the river flattens into the lake in a short 0.5 mile, it makes a substantial 90 degree curve to the right (south). Webb Mountain Park is visible, river right, and a cute spot called “Otter Rock” is river left. Both areas sport several hiking trails. Camping is allowed in Webb Mountain Park. Visit the website at <http://www.monroect.org/webmountain.aspx> for information on camping permits.

Shortly after a set of rapids, keep a close lookout for a large boulder, painted with an Indian face, at the base of a stream entering river right. This is Round Hill Brook. For the next 1.0 mile several small streams enter on either side of the river but none with as much flourish as this one.

At approximately 1.8 miles, the New Haven Rowing Club building is river left with a large, new dock that is used for its many river activities and competitions.

### Strainer

WALTER SIEGMUND  
PHOTO



### Beware of Strainers!

A strainer is the term used for a fallen tree which is blocking all or part of the river channel to the passage of boats, but the current still sweeps under. A strainer can create a dangerous situation for paddlers.

At 0.5 mile downstream is a recent addition to the lake's paddling experience; a new canoe/kayak access that was installed in 2011 by boy scouts implementing an Eagle Scout project. The new access was installed where Four Mile Brook enters river left. The scouts have created a gently-sloped access trail and gazebo with a free parking area. This access (43 – details below) is located on the extreme southerly section of Keith Mitchell Forest in Seymour. To stop and look, you must cross under the bridge carrying Roosevelt Drive where the stream enters to see this new area.

The next feature is Access 44 at Indian Well State Park which boasts almost 1.0 mile of river shoreline river right.



It has a large, inviting sand beach, ample parking, rest rooms, and a well-maintained boat ramp on the southern end of the park. It is a very busy spot during the summer months.

**Note:** The Lake Housatonic section of the river boasts the largest number of canoe/kayak/boat accessible places to grab an easy meal on the entire Housatonic! At this publication, there are at least four restaurants located along the eastern side of the river as you make your way from the Stevenson to the Derby dams. The first is a small convenience store/sandwich shop called the In/Out Market (Citgo). The second is the Lake House Bar and Grill Restaurant. The third is Riverview BBQ Restaurant and the fourth is Mattei's Deli at Whitney Marina. Each one of these destinations has a full dock where you can park your boat, get out, have a bite to eat, and go back to your paddling without even getting your feet wet. You might actually gain weight on this section of the river. Be cautious though as there is increased motor boat traffic in this area.

Even though there is no formal take-out available at the Derby Dam, one can still paddle the next 1.75 miles down to see the dam. The Yale Boat House is located river left and just south of this, river right, is a small beach area one can access. This is a good spot for studying the workings of the Derby Dam but does not offer portage around the dam.

As of publication of this guide, the owners of the Derby Dam are investigating the necessary steps to create a portage around the dam (river left) which would provide direct access to the put-in on the south side of the dam. Look for updates on HVA's website at [www.hvatoday.org](http://www.hvatoday.org).

## ALTERNATIVE ACCESS



**Access 43, (N41.36459; W73.14014) is the Keith Mitchell Forest Canoe Access.**

## DIRECTIONS

Take Route 8 south to Exit 15. Take Route 34 west. Follow this for approximately 4.7 miles. The access is a hard right, shortly after the Route 188/Route 34 intersection. Parking is free, but limited. Short carry down to water's edge. Easy access.

### Access 43

Eagle Scouts

Justin Gittings and Dustin Zrelak were honored by HVA at its October 2011 Annual Meeting for creating and installing a new access where Four Mile Brook enters the Housatonic River.



### Derby Dam

The Derby "Ousatonic" Dam was originally constructed in 1870 as a simple sheer masonry wall. However the mighty river eventually undermined the dam and it gave way in 1891 causing much damage in downtown Derby. It was rebuilt quickly as you see it today with a gentle slope to prevent erosion.



## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION R

### Below Derby Dam, Derby to Seawall (Long Beach), Stratford

**Distance:** 15 miles

**Time:** Approximately 6 to 8 hours. Varies with wind and tide.

**Towns:** Derby, Stratford, Orange, Milford

**Tributaries:** Naugatuck River, Mill River

**Difficulty:** Flatwater with strong tidal influence(s)

**Warning:** Before starting trip, check tide tables for Milford Harbor (<http://tides.mobilegeographics.com/calendar/month/3768.html>)

#### PUT-IN



**Access 45, base of Derby Dam at DEEP fishing area; (N41.32576; W73.10036). Informal access, (fair).**

#### DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 8

Take Route 8 to Exit 15, Route 34 west. Travel 0.8 mile, turn left into Derby Dam DEEP Access road, then a quick right. The river access is at the base of the Derby Dam on the east side of the river. Parking is free.

#### TAKE-OUT



**Access 51, (N41.14807; W73.12952) Seawall on Long Beach in the Lordship section of Stratford.**

#### DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 8

Take Route 8 to Exit 14, Route 110/Howe Ave. Turn left at base of ramp and proceed 7.5 miles. Stay on 110S/East Main Street and drive another 1.3 miles. Turn slight right onto US-1 W/Ferry Boulevard. Continue to follow Ferry Boulevard and merge onto I-95 South. Take Surf Avenue at Exit 30 and head toward Sikorsky Airport. Turn left onto Lordship Boulevard/Route 113. At 1.2 miles this turns into Stratford Road. Look for a right onto Washington Parkway, go 0.3 mile. The Seawall and parking are at the end on the left on Beach Road. There are about 20 parking spots.

#### DESCRIPTION

While the travel distance in this segment of the guide might seem to be a bit long, several additional alternate access points have been included to shorten the trip if needed.

Osprey

BY NASA



#### Osprey

were once in danger due to toxic pollutants which contaminated their food and accumulated in their bodies, poisoning birds and weakening eggshells. Numbers have greatly rebounded due to habitat restoration and reduced use of chemicals.

The primary reason to keep this portion of the trip contiguous is because the tide plays such an important part of it. If one tries to paddle against the incoming or outgoing tides below this final dam, a fun day of paddling could turn into a tortuous, exhausting trip. Check the tide tables for Milford Harbor (<http://tides.mobilegeographics.com/calendar/month/3768.html>) for the best estimate(s) for Derby Dam. Try to start the trip no later than one-half hour before the peak of high tide for the best results, which will allow you to travel with the tide toward Long Island Sound.

For the first time on this river journey, the paddler can detect the distinct smell of the sea at the put-in at the base of the Derby Dam. If the water level is high, the paddler might experience some Class I rapids, but this is unusual. There is a small island, named Buttonball, in the river just after the put-in. Stay to river left of this island.

At 0.5 mile downstream you will pass under the Derby-Shelton Bridge, built in 1918. Slightly further on is the rail bridge carrying the line that heads off toward Fishkill, New York.

While passing under the bridges, look river left to see downtown Derby. Several historic buildings are visible, like the Old Birmingham Bank, as well as the start of the Derby Greenway located atop the late 1950s flood control barrier along the river. Shortly after is the massive Commodore Hull Bridge that carries Route 8 over the river. The O'Sullivan's Island alternate Access 46 is located directly under the bridge at 1.2 miles.

At 0.2 miles, the Naugatuck River, the largest tributary that flows into the Housatonic, enters river left. O'Sullivan's Island, located at the confluence of the Housatonic and Naugatuck rivers, was a very busy shipping and commerce location in the late 18th and early 19th century. Now it is a serene and quiet park that hosts the first part of the Naugatuck River Greenway. Fisherman can be spotted wading in the river at this location.

As the river progresses, East Derby is river left and shortly downstream, the Sunnyside section of Shelton is river right at mile 3.0 and a small marina with permitted access in Sunnyside.

Further along, but still in Shelton, is the next alternate Access 47 called Southbank Open Space at mile 4.0, river right. This spot is especially attractive for paddler access since motor boats are not allowed to use it,



H. ZELL PHOTO

### Japanese Knotweed

has the appearance of bamboo and can grow to 10 feet high. Now recognized as an invasive species, it was brought to the U.S. in the 1800s from Asia for ornamental and erosion-control purposes. Its growth crowds out native plant species and affects the habitat of river inhabitants. Just a piece of the plant carried and deposited downriver can establish a new patch of knotweed.

parking is free, and no permits are required. For the next two miles, the Great River Golf Course and the upper section of the Charles Wheeler Wildlife Management Area is river left, starting in Orange. A small island here offers a nice rest area. At mile 7.0, the Farmill River enters river right and marks the end of the town of Shelton.

Shortly after that, in Stratford, notice a large industrial complex on the west side of the river; this is the Sikorsky Aircraft Company. It has been here for 70 years, next to the Merritt Parkway (Route 15). It's sometimes possible to spot a helicopter undergoing testing, but it is best not to stray too close to the Sikorsky side of the river since it is a secure facility. While passing under Route 15, and the Sikorsky Bridge, observe Ryder's landing, which was once a port, but now houses a condominium community river right.

Soon the paddler enters the beginning of the salt water estuary. Notice the distinctive difference in river vegetation. When passing under some large power lines that cross the river, keep a keen eye out for osprey that nest in the power line towers bordering the river near mile 8.0.

At mile 9.0 is a large power generation plant in Milford. Steer clear of the cooling system that draws water from the river, river left. Slightly further downstream is the largest bridge that crosses the river. The single structure carries both I-95 and the Metro North Railroad. At the time of this writing, this bridge was undergoing a massive renovation due to be completed in 2016. Be very careful navigating around the pilings and construction work below the bridge.

Just after going under the I-95 bridge, notice a marina and shopping complex known as "The Dock" river right. As part of the agreement to build this shopping center, the town required that the owner set aside some free parking just for river access. These spots are marked with special signs right along the river edge of the parking lot, behind the marina. While the marina is private, public paddler access can be found at

### Charles Wheeler Wildlife Management Area

This refuge offers beautiful views of the Nells Island marshes with an area for canoe and kayak launching. Paddlers may see ospreys, egrets, fiddler crabs and more. Among the several side channels to explore, many extend one mile in both north/south and east/west directions. To paddle this section, launch within 90 minutes of high tide from Deerwood Avenue in Milford. (Follow directions for Access 50.)

### Phragmites

Notice the tall reed-like stalks with distinctive feathery seed heads. These belong to an invasive species known as phragmites or common reed (*phragmites australis*). Stands of phragmites are very dense. They crowd out the native plants, such as cattails, and alter the habitat for many wetland species. Eradication is very difficult.





Least tern  
BY STEVEN PINKER

mile 10.0 immediately before the final bridge carrying Route 1, the Boston Post Road. Look for a few rocks and a grassy area at the northwest base of the bridge. It's a short walk to the corner of the parking lot. There are no further crossings by rail or road from this point forward, only open views of the estuary and later Long Island Sound. This is the third alternate access 48.

At this point in the journey wind can become an issue, especially if it is coming up from the Sound. Luckily there are two more alternate access points that can provide a safe harbor if conditions become rough. At mile mark 12.2, one can either use Knapps Landing in Stratford, river right (Access 49) or the DEEP Court Street Boat Access in Milford, river left (Access 50) at the base of Nell's Island. The access points are directly across from each other on the river. Knapps Landing Restaurant is located adjacent to the parking area and boat ramp, river right.

For those who want to claim total river completion victory, keep paddling to Long Island Sound. Approaching the Sound, stay river right. Pass Short Beach on the right and the new Audubon Center, river right (don't get too close to these if the tide is low) and head west to see the Stratford Lighthouse on the shore at mile 14.0. Continue on for less than 1.0 mile hugging the shoreline until arriving at the final terminus take-out which is the Seawall at Long Beach in Stratford. This is a convenient take-out spot with free parking and a beautiful view of Long Island from the top of the stone wall. Nearby is also a nice beach restaurant fixture called Marnick's.



The new two-mile Derby Greenway trail is a hit with both walkers and joggers

## ALTERNATIVE ACCESS



**Access 46, O'Sullivan's Island Derby; (N41.31509; W73.08583); (No permit/free parking)**

## DIRECTIONS

Take Route 8 south to Exit 15, Route 34 west. At bottom of ramp, take a left and travel 0.25 miles, through the first traffic light and then take a left onto Caroline Street. Follow this road straight and continue under a railroad track at 0.15 miles. Continue along and ascend up and over the Derby Greenway crossing while bearing slightly left. Watch carefully for pedestrians. Descend down the other side of the Greenway into a parking lot under the Commodore Hull Bridge. Access to the river is on the right and parking under the bridge is free.

**Access 47, Southbank Open Space; Shelton; (N41.280281; W73.086011); (No permit/free parking)**

## DIRECTIONS

Take Route 8 to Exit 14, Route 110/Howe Ave. Turn left at base of ramp and proceed approximately 4.0 miles. Southbank Open Space is located on the left side of Route 110. There is a small concrete building just inside the park below the parking area. Park at the top and carry boats down the short path to the river.

**Access 48, “The Dock” Shopping Center, Boston Post Road, Route 1 Bridge, Stratford; (N41.200954; W73.112066).**

## DIRECTIONS

Take Route 8 south to Exit 8, Route 108 toward Stratford/Route 15. Keep right at the fork following signs for Route 108. Merge onto Route 108 W/Nichols Avenue Travel 2.9 miles then turn left onto Barnum Avenue; stay on Barnum for 0.2 mile until it becomes Barnum Avenue cutoff and travel another 1.0 mile. The shopping center is on the left. About 10 river parking spots are by the river marked with signs for free parking for river access.

**Access 49, Knapps Landing; (N41.170788; W73.114832); (No permit/free parking), Stratford.**



## DIRECTIONS

Take Route 8 south to Exit 8, Route 108 toward Stratford/Route 15. Keep right at the fork following signs for Route 108. Merge onto Route 108 W/Nichols Avenue. Travel 2.9 miles then turn left onto Barnum Avenue. Continue for 0.2 mile, then turn right onto Main Street and go another 2.3 miles. Finally, turn left onto Sniffen Lane and go another 0.5 mile. The six free parking spots are just to the right of the boat ramp.

**Access 50, Milford Boat Launch ramp at bottom of Nells Island, Court Street, Milford; (N41.183543; W73.100147).**

## DIRECTIONS

Take Route 8 south to Exit 8, Route 108 toward Stratford/Route 15. Keep right at the fork following signs for Route 108. Merge onto Route 108 W/Nichols Avenue. Travel 2.9 miles then turn left onto Barnum Avenue. and stay on Barnum Avenue for 0.2 mile until it becomes Barnum Avenue cutoff; travel another 1.1 miles. Continue onto Bridgeport Avenue, cross over the river on Route 1. Go another 0.5 mile and turn right onto Naugatuck Avenue. Go 0.6 mile, then right onto Milford Point Road for 0.8 mile. Take a right onto Court Street. The boat launch is at the end of Court Street. There may be a chain across the driveway but visitors may carry boats to the river. Contact the CT DEEP for information, 860-485-0226.



## How did the river get its name?

It comes from the Mohican Indian phrase “usi-a-di-enuk”, translated as “beyond the mountain place.” So, at the end of your enjoyable journey, you have progressed in distance, mind and spirit way beyond the mountain place where this very special 149-mile river began. Paddle on!



Housatonic enters Long Island Sound at Stratford

# HVA PARTNERS

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## FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES

EarthShare – [www.earthshare.org](http://www.earthshare.org)  
Environmental Protection Agency – [www.epa.gov/aboutepa/states/ct.html](http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/states/ct.html)  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)  
USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service – [www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)  
United States Geologic Survey – [ct.water.usgs.gov](http://ct.water.usgs.gov)  
Connecticut Conservation Districts – [conservect.org](http://conservect.org)  
Connecticut Department of Agriculture – [www.ct.gov/doag](http://www.ct.gov/doag)  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection – [www.ct.gov/deep](http://www.ct.gov/deep)  
Connecticut Department of Transportation – [www.ct.gov/dot](http://www.ct.gov/dot)  
Connecticut SeaGrant Program – [www.seagrant.uconn.edu](http://www.seagrant.uconn.edu)



## PARTNERS PROTECTING THE HOUSATONIC RIVER

Appalachian Trail Conservancy – [www.appalachiantrail.org](http://www.appalachiantrail.org)  
Bantam River Watershed Association  
Connecticut Chapter Appalachian Mountain Club – [www.ct-amc.org](http://www.ct-amc.org)  
Connecticut Chapters of Trout Unlimited – [www.cttrout.org](http://www.cttrout.org)  
Connecticut Forest and Park Association – [www.ctwoodlands.org](http://www.ctwoodlands.org)  
Candlewood Lake Authority - [www.candlewoodlakeauthority.org](http://www.candlewoodlakeauthority.org)  
Connecticut Land Conservation Council – [www.ctconservation.org](http://www.ctconservation.org)  
Farmington River Watershed Association – [frwa.org](http://frwa.org)  
Friends of the Lake (Lillinonah) – [www.friendsofthelake.org](http://www.friendsofthelake.org)  
Healthy Valley Committee of the Valley Health and Human Services Council –  
[www.valleycouncil.org](http://www.valleycouncil.org)  
Housatonic Environmental Action League  
Housatonic Fly Fishermen's Association – <http://hffa.net>  
Housatonic River Commission  
Housatonic River Initiative – [www.housatonic-river.com](http://www.housatonic-river.com)  
International Federation of Fly Fishers – [fedflyfishers.org/Councils/NorthEastern.aspx](http://fedflyfishers.org/Councils/NorthEastern.aspx)  
Lake Housatonic Authority – [www.lakehousatonicauthority.org/main.htm](http://www.lakehousatonicauthority.org/main.htm)  
Lake Lillinonah Authority – [www.lakelillinonahauthority.org](http://www.lakelillinonahauthority.org)  
Lake Zoar Authority – [lakezoarauthority.org](http://lakezoarauthority.org)  
Land Trust Alliance – [www.landtrustalliance.org](http://www.landtrustalliance.org)  
Naugatuck River Revival Group –  
[www.facebook.com/pages/Naugatuck-River-Revival-Group/187832587906008](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Naugatuck-River-Revival-Group/187832587906008)  
Naugatuck River Watershed Association – [www.naugawatshed.org](http://www.naugawatshed.org)  
Northwest Conservation District –  
[www.conservect.org/Default.aspx?alias=www.conservect.org/northwest](http://www.conservect.org/Default.aspx?alias=www.conservect.org/northwest)  
Pomperaug River Watershed Association – [www.pomperaug.org](http://www.pomperaug.org)  
Pootatuck Watershed Association – [www.pootatuckwatershed.org](http://www.pootatuckwatershed.org)  
Shepaug River Association – [www.shepaug.org](http://www.shepaug.org)  
Rivers Alliance of Connecticut - [www.riversalliance.org](http://www.riversalliance.org)  
Still River Alliance  
The Nature Conservancy – [www.nature.org/connecticut/index.htm](http://www.nature.org/connecticut/index.htm)  
Theodore Gordon Flyfishers – [www.theodogordonflyfishers.org](http://www.theodogordonflyfishers.org)  
Trout Unlimited Connecticut – [cttrout.org](http://cttrout.org)  
Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area –  
[www.upperhousatonicheritage.org](http://www.upperhousatonicheritage.org)







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Whitewater  
Kayaking on the  
Housatonic

BY TIM ABBOTT

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## LITCHFIELD HILLS GREENPRINT COLLABORATIVE

Aton Forest, Inc. – [atonforesthomes.blogspot.com](http://atonforesthomes.blogspot.com)  
The Colebrook Land Conservancy – [colebrooklandconservancy.org](http://colebrooklandconservancy.org)  
Connecticut Farmland Trust – [www.ctfarmland.org](http://www.ctfarmland.org)  
Cornwall Conservation Trust – [cornwallconservationtrust.org](http://cornwallconservationtrust.org)  
Flanders Nature Center and Land Trust – [www.flandersnaturecenter.org](http://www.flandersnaturecenter.org)  
The Goshen Land Trust, Inc. – [goshenlandtrust.org](http://goshenlandtrust.org)  
Hartland Land Trust – [www.hartlandlandtrust.org](http://www.hartlandlandtrust.org)  
The Kent Land Trust – [www.kentlandtrust.org](http://www.kentlandtrust.org)  
Lake Waramaug Task Force – [www.lwtf.org](http://www.lwtf.org)  
Litchfield Land Trust – [litchfieldlandtrust.net](http://litchfieldlandtrust.net)  
The Morris Land Trust  
Naromi Land Trust – [www.naromi.org](http://www.naromi.org)  
New Hartford Land Trust – [www.newhartfordlandtrust.org](http://www.newhartfordlandtrust.org)  
Norfolk Land Trust  
Salisbury Association – [salisburyassn.org](http://salisburyassn.org)  
Sharon Land Trust – [www.sharonlandtrust.typepad.com](http://www.sharonlandtrust.typepad.com)  
Steep Rock Association – [steeprockassoc.org](http://steeprockassoc.org)  
The Trust for Public Land – [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org)  
Warren Land Trust – [warrenlandtrust.org](http://warrenlandtrust.org)  
Watertown Land Trust – [www.watertownlandtrust.org](http://www.watertownlandtrust.org)  
Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust – [www.weantinoge.org](http://www.weantinoge.org)  
The White Memorial Conservation Center, Inc. –  
[www.whitememorialcc.org](http://www.whitememorialcc.org)

Other partners include all those upstream across the Berkshires of Massachusetts, and all of the lake associations, community land trusts, municipal Inland Wetland and Watercourse Commissions and Conservations, Councils of Government and Councils of Elected Officials across the Housatonic River Watershed.



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Screech Owl

SCOTT FORESMAN  
ILLUSTRATION

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## OUTDOOR SAFETY TIPS



**SUN EXPOSURE PROTECTION** – Exposure to the sun causes wrinkles and age spots and is the number one cause of skin cancer. Avoid direct exposure to the sun between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. when the ultraviolet (UV) rays are most intense. Also be sure to drink lots of water. **USE SUNSCREEN** with SPF 30 and apply on clean, dry skin about 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply throughout the day even if overcast – 80 per cent of UV rays are still present on cloudy days. **COVER YOUR BODY** with long sleeves and pants in light colors. Wear a hat to protect the neck and cheeks or use an umbrella. **USE SUNGLASSES** to protect eyes from UV rays.

**CHECK FOR TICKS** – When spending time in wooded or grassy areas, wear long sleeved shirts, pants, socks and shoes. Check yourself and pets all over for ticks immediately afterwards. Deer ticks are small and may look like a freckle or speck of dirt. **REMOVE TICKS IMMEDIATELY** with tweezers or special tools – available at stores that sell outdoor/camping supplies – to carefully extract the tick. Try to get the whole tick without squeezing out the blood that may be infected with harmful bacteria. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the deer tick (black-legged tick species) can transmit Lyme disease. **LYME DISEASE SYMPTOMS** may not appear for months after the tick bite. Common symptoms are joint aches, fever and general malaise. Some people experience the notorious bulls-eye rash, but this does not always occur.



Deer Tick  
STUART MEEK PHOTO

**WATCH OUT FOR POISON IVY** – Avoid poison ivy, normally found in wooded areas, exposed rocky areas and open fields. It has clusters of three leaves, alternate leaf arrangement and no thorns. Leaf color ranges from light green (young leaves) to dark green (mature leaves), turning bright red in fall; some sources say leaves are reddish when expanding, turn green through maturity, then back to red, orange, or yellow in the fall. The mature leaves are somewhat shiny. Each leaf has a few or no teeth along its edge, and the leaf surface is smooth. Poison ivy can cause severe itching that develops into reddish colored inflammation or non-colored bumps and then blistering. Treat the lesions with Calamine lotion.

See page 53 for information on stinging nettle.



Poison Ivy  
STILFELER PHOTO

**FIRST AID KIT** – Be familiar with the contents of your kit and how to use it.

**PROPER FOOTWEAR** – Wear something that can get wet and secures to your foot in case you need to get out of the boat, especially at beaver dams.

Housatonic in Kent



**Bald Eagle**  
GARY ROTHSTEIN PHOTO



**Great Blue Heron**  
AARON LOGAN PHOTO



**Piping Plover**  
STEVEN PINKER PHOTO

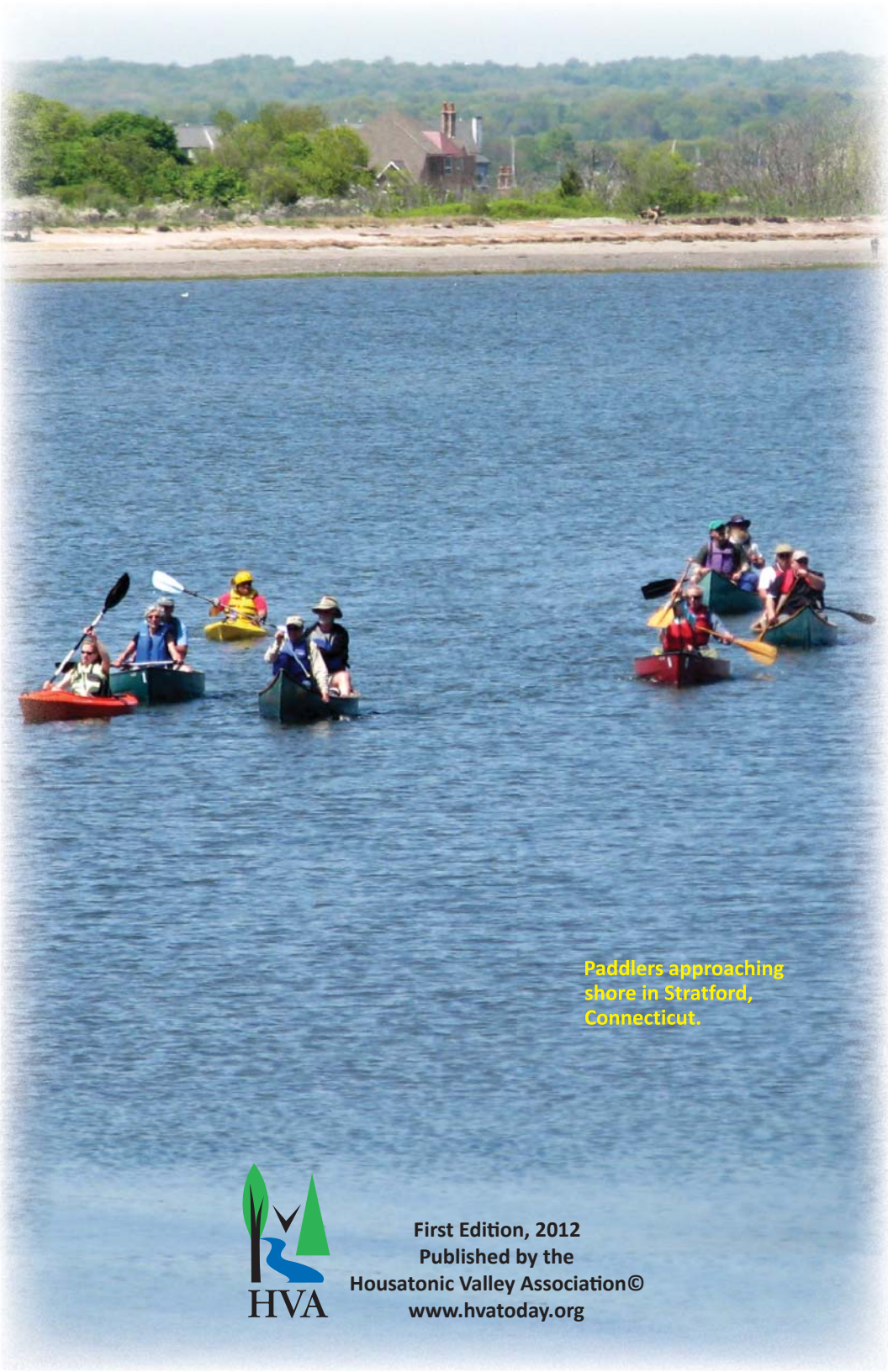


Housatonic River



**Globe Flower**  
ELEANOR SAULYS PHOTO  
CONNECTICUT BOTANICAL SOCIETY





Paddlers approaching shore in Stratford, Connecticut.



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