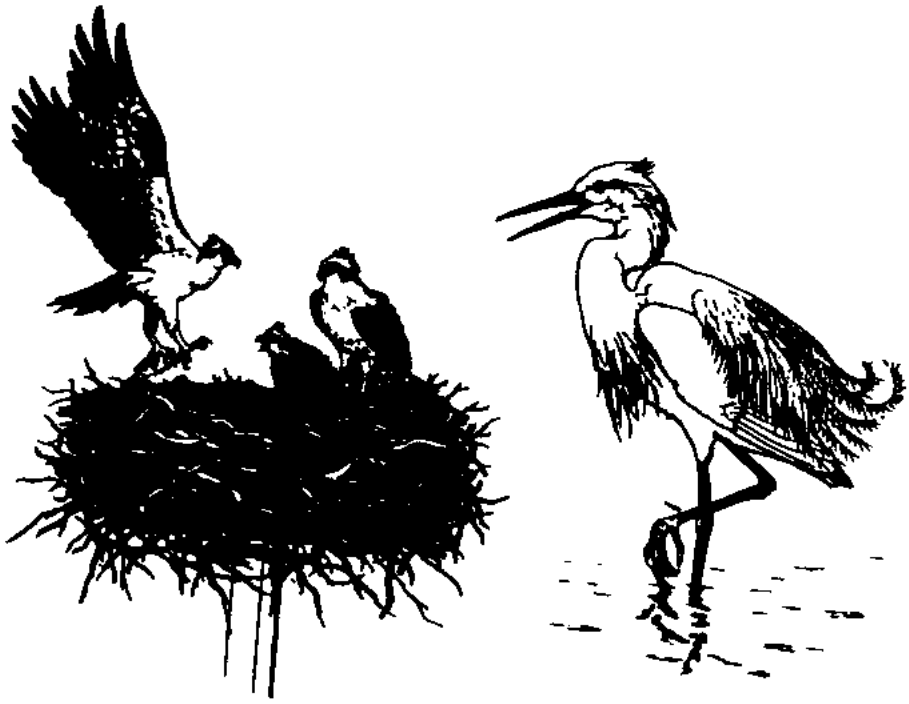

Canoe and Natural Resource Guide to the Quinnipiac River

Includes detailed maps showing canoe and fishing access points.
Also, historical, geological and wildlife information.

Published by the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association
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The Community Foundation of Greater New Haven
Second edition funded through
The Quinnipiac River Watershed Partnership

QUINNIPIAC RIVER ACCESS GUIDE

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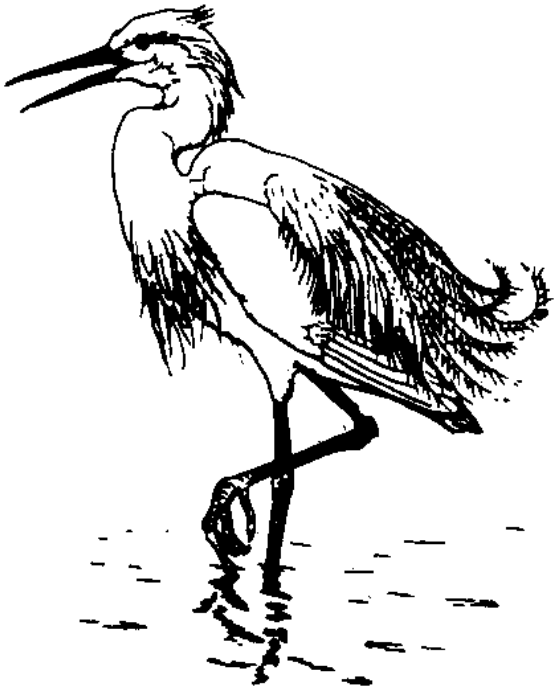
Wildlife artwork by Paul Fusco,
Department of Environmental Protection-
Wildlife Division



Introduction

The Quinnipiac River provides numerous opportunities for the general public to enjoy water-based recreation within minutes of several large population centers. Considering its urban surroundings, the river offers some surprisingly serene natural and historic settings throughout its length. This second edition of the Quinnipiac River Access Guide is intended by the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association to introduce the public to the river and its recreational offerings. The guide begins with general information about the river followed by maps and text including recommended access points, recreation tips, safety tips, and notes about features of interest. Please note that where reference is made in the text to the "left" or "right" river bank, it is assumed that the user is oriented in a downstream direction.

The Character of the Quinnipiac River

The Quinnipiac River originates in a red maple swamp in Farmington and forms a channel near the border of New Britain and Plainville. From there, the river flows in a southerly direction, passing through Southington, Cheshire, Meriden, Wallingford, North Haven, Hamden and New Haven before ending its 38 mile journey in New Haven Harbor and Long Island Sound. The 170 square miles of watershed supplying the Quinnipiac encompasses all or part of fourteen municipalities. The watershed is densely populated and urbanized with a variety of land uses including residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, agricultural and undeveloped land. The river channel has been culverted, dammed and otherwise modified by human influence.

The Eight Mile River, Ten Mile River, Harbor Brook, Wharton Brook, and Muddy River are the five largest of some twenty tributaries to the mainstream Quinnipiac. The river carries an average flow of 299 cubic feet per second (cfs) and a minimum dry weather stream flow of 45 cfs. The river is generally navigable from mid-Plainville to its mouth. However, numerous deadfalls may cause blockages through some stretches, particularly in Southington,Wallingford and North Haven, and many stretches are not passable during low water conditions. The tidal influence of Long Island Sound extends as far north as Wallingford, a distance of about fourteen miles from the river's mouth.

Geology of the Basin

The Quinnipiac River basin was born some 200 million years ago during the late-Triassic and early-Jurassic geologic periods when a single, large land mass composed of the present-day continents of North America, Europe and Africa began to slowly drift apart. As these land masses separated, the center of the state subsided and formed the Connecticut Valley. Over millions of years, erosive forces carried sediments from the metamorphic rocks of the adjacent uplands down into the basin. Many of the sedimentary deposits exhibited a distinctive red-brown coloration. Dinosaurs roamed the valley, and in some locations left footprints in the mud.

The stresses created by the shifting land masses caused linear fractures to form in the sedimentary deposits, many of which filled with lava. Lava also flowed onto the surface of the land in some areas. These lava flows cooled into basalt, or "trap rock". River channels, including the predecessor to the Quinnipiac, were eventually carved by erosive forces. Erosion also exposed the basalt ridges, which were harder and more resistant than the surrounding sediments.

About 3 million years ago, glaciers crept into the area from the north and scoured the landscape as they passed. The glaciers deposited mixed sediments composed of rocks, clays, silts and sands, forming glacial "till". Water from the melting ice flowed under the glaciers in channels and depressions, depositing well-sorted gravels, sands, silts and clays. As the climate warmed and the last of the glaciers retreated about 22,000 years ago, the glacial melt-waters deposited additional sediments in the river valleys and depressions.

Evidence of these geologic processes can be observed today throughout the Quinnipiac River basin. The river originates in the basalt ridges of Farmington and Plainville and passes similar formations in Southington, Meriden and New Haven. Red sandstones and mudstones are especially apparent in the Gorge in South Meriden. A sand plain created by meltwaters fills the river basin in Wallingford and North Haven. Glacial sand and gravel deposits underlie much of the river valley and provide the source of drinking water for several towns along the river. Farther south in North Haven and New Haven, red sandstone can be observed on the river's east side.

History of Human Development

"We learn of a single Indian trail which came south from Farmington to the headwaters of the Quinnipiac River, and then divided into two, one following East Mountain around Hanging Hills, the other continuing down the river. The first highway from Farmington to White Oak in 1695 was probably along the trail.

At certain times of the year hunting excursions were made by the young men, down along the Quinnipiac, even as far as Wallingford. They were richly rewarded for labor and exposure.

At this time the ridges and some of the valleys near the Burying Ground hill were heavily laden with oak and hickory grounds. Ponds of water were frequent and the little streams of today were then quite large creeks. Winged and four-footed game were seemingly inexhaustible. Fish of all kinds abounded in the river, as salmon, shad, etc. Wild turkeys, deer, wolves and bears were abundant".

(Unknown author, from an historical account of Southington, Connecticut dated 1899)

The word "Quinnipiac" is derived from the language of the Algonquin tribes whose members lived, hunted and fished along the river for centuries. Roughly translated, the term means "long water land", which is probably a reference to the river's extensive estuary.

When colonial farmers and merchants began to settle the area in the 1600s,they brought with them the European concept of land as private property and natural resources as commodities to be bought and sold. They fenced "their" lands, cleared woodland for lumber, and grazed large herds of cows, pigs and sheep on the newly opened fields. William Cronan, in his book Changes In The Land, writes "most New England naturalists agreed by the 1790s that because of a number of complicated ecological relationships (having to do with deforestation and agriculture) flooding increased dramatically while streams and springs dried up. Deforestation, grazing, plowing, erosion and watershed changes all contributed to a problem that became endemic to colonial agriculture: soil exhaustion."

Historically, the river has provided an abundant supply of wildlife and fish for trappers and fishermen. Opossum, river otter, raccoons, skunks, red fox and grey fox were trapped in the upper portions. The Quinnipiac River tidal marshes were known as the most productive muskrat habitat in the northeastern United States. At the turn of the century, the Quinnipiac's oyster industry was flourishing. The estuary also provided a biologically productive habitat for a variety of other shell fish, finfish and crustaceans. Today, the most significant commercially utilized species present in the river is the Eastern oyster.

As the industrial revolution developed in the 1800s, local agriculture steadily declined or moved westward. Commercial lumbering and fur trading in the region faded after natural resources were depleted. The change from an agricultural to an industrial society placed new demands on the Quinnipiac and its watershed. Industries in need of large quantities of water and water power located along its banks. The Quinnipiac provided a convenient place to dispose of industrial waste, and as the river communities grew in size, so did the volumes of domestic sewage and runoff entering the river. Dam construction blocked fish spawning.

Today, water pollution control facilities in every major community along the river and discharge permitting controls by the Department of Environmental Protection have helped to improve water quality and turn around some of the damage. Many old factory buildings and dams remain along the river that have historical significance such as the Britannia Spoon Factory in the Yalesville section of Wallingford and the dam at Hanover Pond that was constructed by the Meriden Cutlery Company. Fish ladders are planned to allow fish to spawn upriver.

Wildlife-Based Recreation

Abuse of the Quinnipiac's waters as well as illegal dumping and filling of the river's wetlands have done substantial harm to wildlife in the watershed. But as river quality and wetlands protection improve, wildlife populations have begun to rebound. A surprising number of species can be observed along the river and its associated riparian habitats.

Typical wildlife species encountered in the non-tidal inland portion of the river (Plainville south to Hamden) include: great blue heron, common merganser; spotted sandpiper, wild turkey, killdeer, various other songbirds, white-tailed deer, river otter and muskrats. As you move into the tidal section (North Haven to the mouth in New Haven), it is not uncommon to see greater numbers and varieties of ducks, osprey, canada geese, various gulls and sand-pipers, greater and lesser yellowlegs, snowy egrets and great egrets, and occasionally king rail or a least bittern. Kingfishers and ospreys are once again common in the marsh, and bald eagles winter here.

The season of the year and the time of day will determine what you will see. For example, early morning is the best observation time because wildlife are foraging for the first time that day and have not been disturbed by previous canoeists. Autumn is a good time to see a variety of birds during their migration.

The QRWA actively participates in wildlife management activities such as erecting wood duck nest boxes, bat roosting boxes, and osprey nest platforms. The QRWA also offers guided canoe trips. Other groups, such as the Quinnipiac Valley Audubon, sponsor bird-watching outings. In the fall, duck hunters report good hunting in the river marshlands in North Haven and New Haven.

Fishing in the Quinnipiac

During the 1940s and early 1950s, the Quinnipiac River was a mecca for trout fishermen. At its peak, the river contained huge populations of yellow perch, sunfish, bull-heads; suckers and eels, and very few carp. Trout were stocked into the river from Carpenters Dam (Cheshire-Meriden town line) to Red Bridge (South Meriden).The river also had several tributaries that held beautiful native brook trout, of which there are still a few left today.

However, beginning in the 1950s until recent years, an ever-increasing human population and an uncaring public soon caused the river to deteriorate to the point that many simply stopped fishing the river. With the recent improvements in water quality, fishing is now staging a comeback in the "Q".

Fish can be found just about anywhere in the river now if one takes the time to look for them. The upper reaches of the Quinnipiac (Plainville / Southington / Cheshire) still yield a surprise trout every once in a while (some of them quite large), as well as suckers, bullheads and carp. The portion of the river known as "The Gorge" (Carpenters Dam down to Red Bridge) is currently the most heavily stocked (trout) area of the river. Also, largemouth bass can once again be found in the river from just above Red Bridge down to Hanover Pond. Hanover Pond offers exciting bass fishing. From Hanover Dam down, a huge population of carp can be found. QRWA supplements these with stocked trout through Wallingford. At North Haven, an occasional striper might be found as well as white perch. As you near Long Island Sound, you can almost count on a bluefish or two to give you a fishing thrill. Overall, the Quinnipiac River may be one of the most underrated and overlooked rivers for recreational fishing in Connecticut.

In colonial days before dams were constructed huge numbers of anadromous fish such as American shad, alewives, and blue-back herring swam up the Quinnipiac each spring from Long Island Sound to fresh water spawning areas. A 1997 study showed that these species are still present in low numbers; their numbers could rebound after fish ways are built to bipass dams.

Boating Safety

In encouraging recreational use of the river, the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association cautions canoeists that there are risks associated with boating. We recommend that appropriate boating safety practices be followed, including, but not necessarily exclusive to, wearing Coast Guard approved life jackets, wearing footwear, familiarizing yourself with your route prior to your trip and being prepared to maneuver snags, rapids and dams. It is also important to be aware of changing river characteristics after a rain event. Avoid the river in major floods. Since the river is public property, the QRWA is in no way responsible for injuries incurred during use of the river. Have a fun (and safe) time!

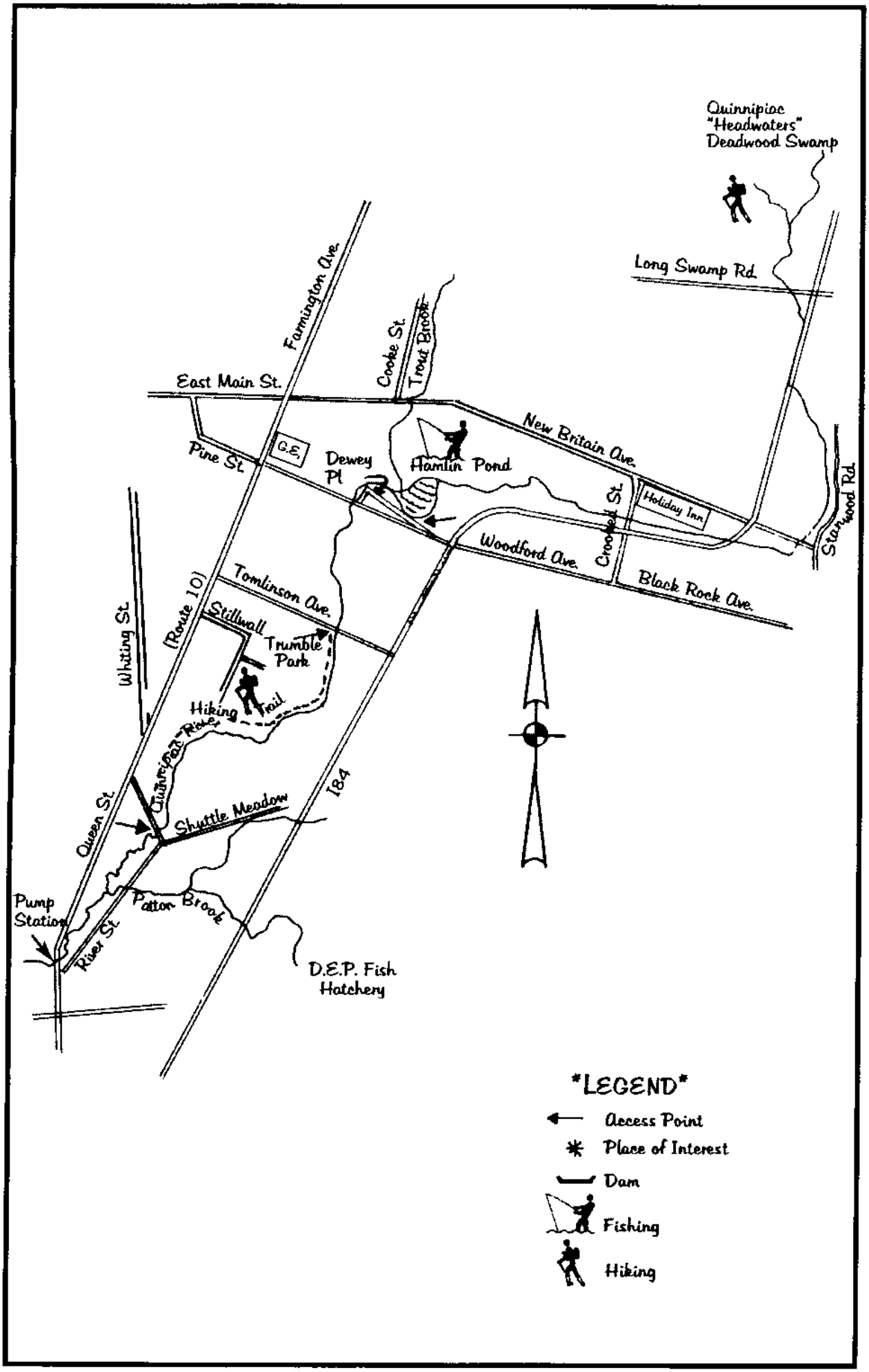
Water Quality

Water pollution control activities in Connecticut began on the Quinnipiac when the General Assembly passed the first recorded water pollution control legislation in 1886 prohibiting the city of Meriden from discharging raw sewage into the river, which resulted in the construction of the state's first sewage treatment plant in 1891. A report by the State Board of Health in 1914 described the river as polluted, especially near its mouth where fish life had "practically disappeared." The report indicated that at the time there were a total of 71 industrial discharges to the Quinnipiac River. Twenty-two were located in the city of Meriden, which has a history as a center for the silver and metalworking industries.

From the arrival of the settlers through the coming of the industrial age, the water quality of the Quinnipiac River declined to a degraded condition until some recently achieved improvement. The late 1960s and early 1970s marked the beginning of a new era in the health of the Quinnipiac after decades of abuse and neglect. Federal and state laws were enacted to require all industrial dischargers and municipal sewage treatment plants and other "point sources" of water pollution to obtain permits limiting the amounts of various pollutants that could be discharged into the river. Increased public awareness and activism, including a hard-fought lawsuit against the Upjohn plant in North Haven, brought additional pressure to bear on the major industrial sources of pollution in the Quinnipiac. Today, there are some eighteen permitted industrial discharges into the Quinnipiac, as well as several other permitted discharges into tributaries of the river.

Municipal wastewater treatment plants likewise have faced greater scrutiny and stricter controls in recent years. Studies conducted by the state Department of Environmental Protection in the 1970s and 1980s indicated that the forty million gallons of treated municipal wastewater discharged into the river each day exceeded the river's ability to handle wastes. In response to those conditions, the five municipal wastewater plants that discharge to the river in Southington; Cheshire, Meriden, Wallingford and North Haven have all been upgraded to advanced levels of treatment since 1984.

While great strides have been made in controlling industrial and municipal "point sources" of pollution, efforts to control pollution from stormwater discharges and "nonpoint source" runoff are in their infancy. Stormwater runoff and the landscape contribute heavy loads of sediment, nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous from fertilizers and other sources), oxygen-depleting organic matter, oils and greases, toxic pollutants and more. Today, the water quality classification of the river varies, but it is generally still degraded throughout its length due to nonpoint sources and, despite the levels of treatment, the sheer volume of point source discharges. However, increasing concentrations of dissolved oxygen and decreasing concentrations of bacteria, phosphorous and heavy metals are signs of the improving health of the river. Although swimming is not recommended, the river is generally suitable for boating, fishing and wildlife habitat. CT DEP recommends against eating fish caught in the upper river above Meriden Gorge due to historic contamination by PCB's. They also recommend a limit of one meal per month for fish caught from Meriden Gorge to Hanover Pond.


Quinnipiac
"Headwaters"
Deadwood Swamp
Long Swamp Rd.
Farmington Ave.
Cooke St.
Trout Brook
East Main St.
New Britain Ave.
C.E.
Pine St.
Dewey
Pl.
Hamlin Pond
Crooked St.
Holiday Inn
Starwood Rd.
Woodford Ave.
Black Rock Ave.
Tomlinson Ave.
Stillwall
Trumble
Park
Hiking Trail
Whiting St.
(Route 10)
Quinnipiac River
Queen St.
Shuttle Meadow
184
Pump
Station
River St.
Patton Brook
D.E.P. Fish
Hatchery
LEGEND
Access Point
Place of Interest
Dam
Fishing
Hiking

Dead Wood Swamp (headwaters) to Plainville-Southington Line

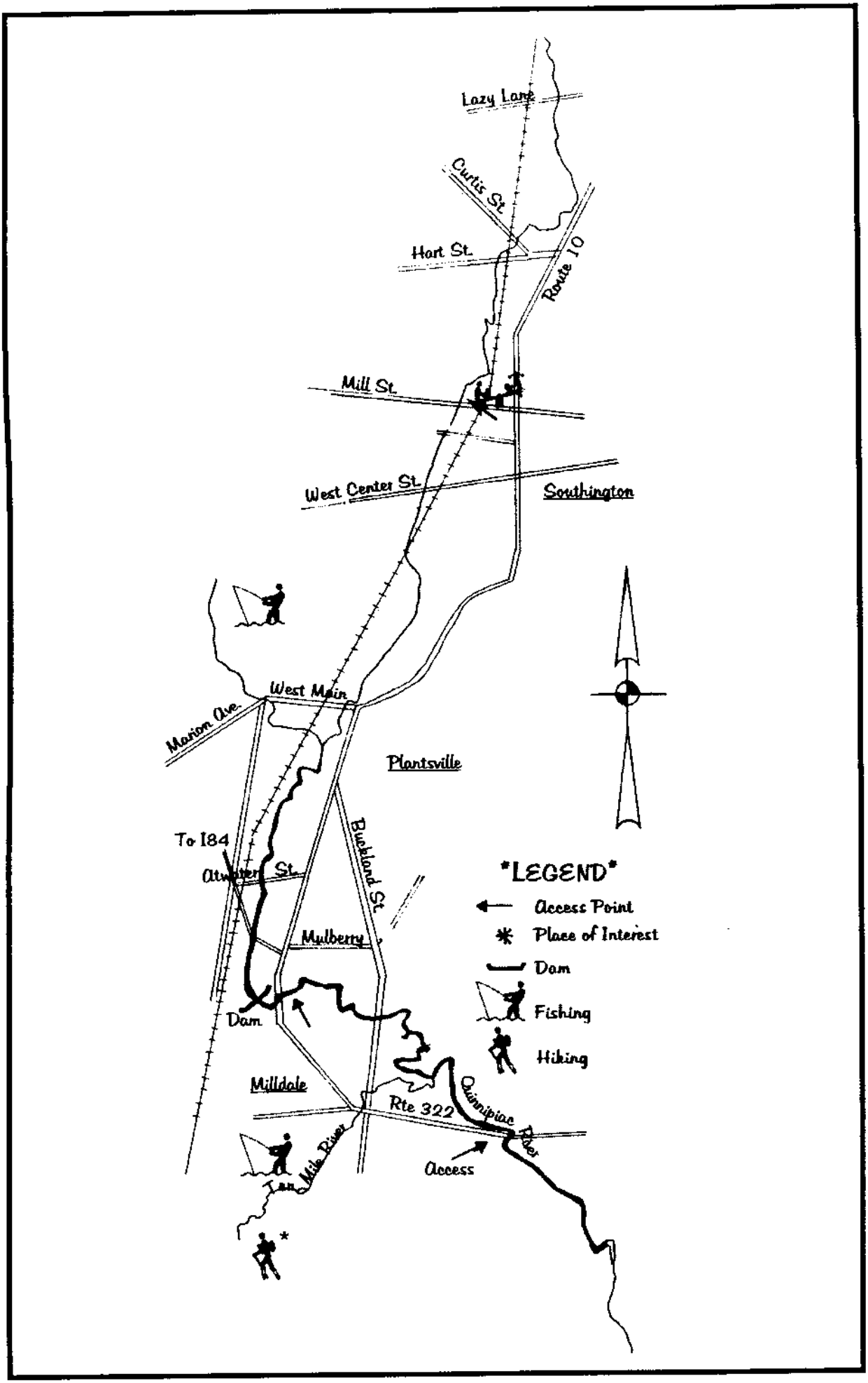
Length: Approximately 2.4 miles (of canoeable stretch)

Canoe Access Points:
- Hamlin Pond, Dewey Place off Woodford Avenue
- Tomlinson Avenue
- Shuttle Meadow Road, Plainville, to north and south,
- Queen St. (Rt. 10) Pump Station, Southington, to south

Canoeing Tips:
- From Shuttle Meadow Road Access, take short trips to the north and south
- Impassable from Queen St. north to Plainville line. Certain areas only canoeable in the spring

Other Activities:
- Excellent riverside hiking and biking trail from Tomlinson Street south to Shuttle Meadow Road

Notes of Interest:
Hamlin Pond is stocked with trout annually for town fishing (for Plainville residents only). The Farmington Canal passed through Plainville, and the Plainville Historic Center has an extensive permanent display on the canal, as well as reference materials. The Historic Center is located on 29 Pierce Street. The Farmington Land Trust has information about the history of the Dead Wood Swamp area. A trail exists in that area that parishioners from New Britain would travel in the 1700s to reach the Farmington Congregational Church.


Lazy Lane
Curtis St.
Hart St.
Route 10
Mill St.
West Center St.
Southington
West Main
Marion Ave.
Plantsville
To I84
Atwater St.
Buckland St.
Mulberry
Dam
Milldale
Rte 322
Quinnipiac River
Access
Tan Mile River
LEGEND
Access Point
Place of Interest
Dam
Fishing
Hiking

Mill Street, Southington to Route 322; Southington

Length: Approximately 6 miles

Canoe Access Points:

- Queen St. Pump Station, N. of River St.
- Mill Street bridge at Town Park
- Canoe ramp (unimproved) 100 ft. east of Rt. 10 across from Bowling Alley
- Route 322 Bridge

Canoeing Tips:

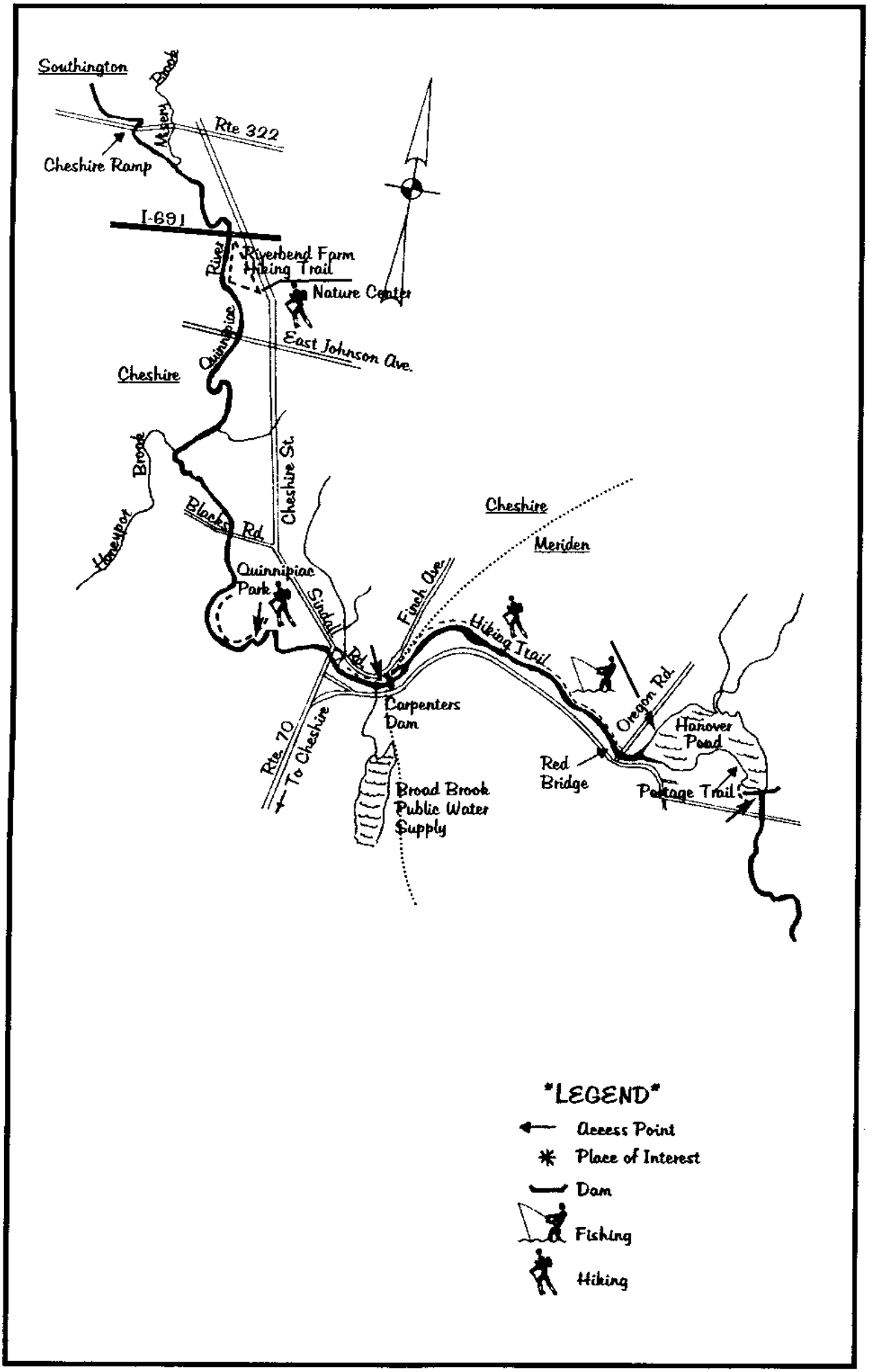
- Generally easy paddling from Mill St.
- Approximately 2 1/2 hour trip south from Mill St.
- USE CAUTION when approaching portage at 4-foot Plants Dam near Bowling Lanes, just north-west of Route 10. Portage on left bank is recommended. Or use as access point.
- Generally passable only during Spring and higher water conditions.
- There may be occasional blockages, some severe, from deadfalls throughout.

Other Activities:

The Quinnipiac, Eight Mile River, and Ten Mile River all support native trout. The Ten Mile River is stocked with trout by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

Notes of Interest:

The stretch from Mill Street to West Main Street is channelized, relatively narrow (about 20 ft.), and shallow. Below West Main Street, the Eight Mile River joins the Quinnipiac, effectively doubling the volume of water in the river. The channel meanders until it reaches Plants Dam in Plantsville. Beyond the dam, the river passes under Route 10 and enters a series of tight S-curves. Following its confluence with the Ten Mile River, the Quinnipiac meanders gently to the Route 322 bridge.


Southington
Mixsen Brook
Rte 322
Cheshire Ramp
I-691
Riverbend Farm
Hiking Trail
Nature Center
East Johnson Ave.
Quinnipiac River
Cheshire
Honeypot Brook
Blacks Rd.
Cheshire St.
Quinnipiac Park
Sindall Rd.
Finch Ave.
Cheshire
Meriden
Hiking Trail
Oregon Rd.
Carpenters Dam
Rte 70
To Cheshire
Broad Brook Public Water Supply
Red Bridge
Hanover Pond
Portage Trail
"LEGEND"
Access Point
Place of Interest
Dam
Fishing
Hiking

Route 322, Cheshire to Hanover Pond, Meriden

Length: Approximately 5 miles

Canoe Access Points:

- Route 322 bridge at Southington-Cheshire Line across from Southington Drive-In.
- Cheshire Water Pollution Control Facility
- Sindall Rd., Cheshire at Carpenter's dam by old Meriden pump house.
- Red Bridge (intersection of Oregon Road and River Road), South Meriden
- Dossin Beach (Hanover Pond), Oregon Road, South Meriden
- Habershon Field (Hanover Pond), Camp Street off Main Street (Rt. 70), South Meriden. There also is a public boat launch here for larger trailered power boats.

Canoeing Tips:

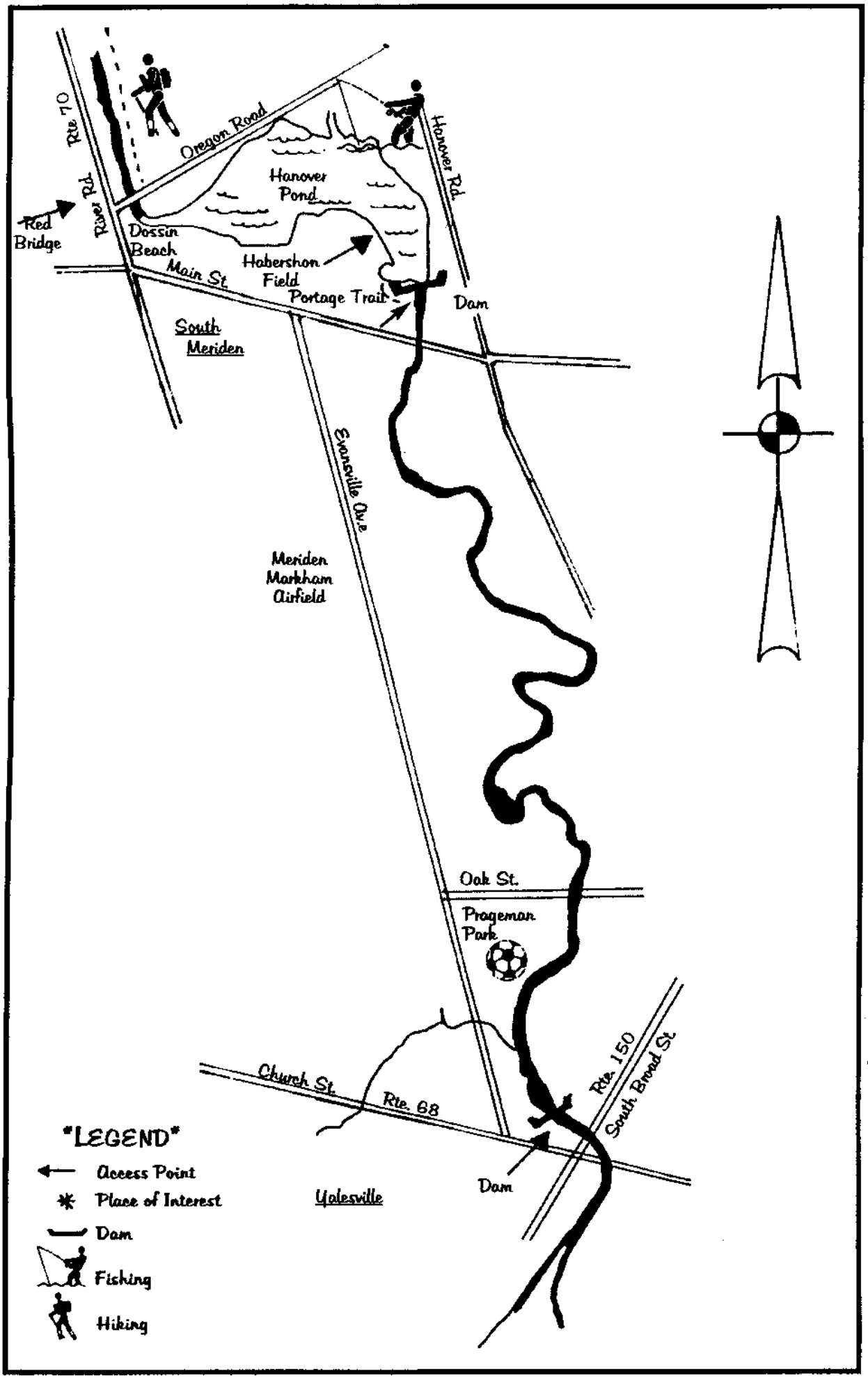
- Approximately 2-3 hour trip.
- Portage at Carpenter's Dam (3.5 miles from access point at Route 322) on the left bank Path is marked by signs. Watch out for submerged pipe 150 feet upstream of dam.
- Generally easy paddling up to Carpenter's dam, though some experience recommended to maneuver around, over and through the many tree falls and assorted quick turns, especially during extreme high and low water levels.
- During summer low water periods be prepared to drag your boat over shallow stretches.
- Some experience in whitewater recommended from Carpenters Dam to Red Bridge, particularly during high water periods, due to increasing water velocity and rocks below Carpenter's Dam. During lower water periods this is a good whitewater learning area.
- Hanover Pond is shallow and an excellent learning area for general canoeing skills.

Other Activities

- Fifteen numbered stops correspond to interpretive lessons on river ecology and wildlife in the Canoeable Trail Guide, available from the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association.
- At Riverbound Farm on the left river bank, just south of the I-691 bridge, a loop hiking trail is maintained by the Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society.
- Birding is good along the riverside hiking trail at the Water Pollution Control Facility
- Hiking is available on a 1.5-mile trail along the left bank from Oregon Road to Carpenter's Dam. The trail, which follows the old Meriden-Waterbury Railroad right-of-way, is not marked but is well-worn and easily walked and followed. It is a good cross-country skiing path in the winter.
- Fishing is recommended along the entire stretch. The bridges at East Johnson Avenue and Blacks Road are good access points. The stretch from Carpenters Dam to Oregon Road is stocked, and is accessible from Carpenter's Dam down to Oregon Road along Route 70 on the right bank (please respect private property!), or along the hiking trail on the left bank.

Notes of Interest:

This stretch is the course for the QRWA's annual Downriver Classic Canoe Race. In the 1800s, at least two mills, an ice house, four iron bridges and a railroad existed along the riverscape from Cheshire Street to Red Bridge. Red Bridge is the oldest bridge spanning the Quinnipiac. It was built in 1891 by Berlin Iron Bridge Company, in Berlin, Connecticut, which was then New England's largest structural fabricator. This wrought iron lenticular truss is among the 600 surviving lenticular trusses out of over 2,000 erected in the United States, and is one of only twenty-five remaining in Connecticut.


Rte 70
Oregon Road
Hanover Rd.
Hanover Pond
River Rd.
Red Bridge
Dossin Beach
Habershon Field
Main St.
Portage Trail
Dam
South Meriden
Evansville Ave.
Meriden Markham Airfield
Oak St.
Progeman Park
Church St.
Rte. 68
Rte. 150
South Broad St.
Dam
Yalesville
"LEGEND"
Access Point
Place of Interest
Dam
Fishing
Hiking

Hanover Pond, Meriden to Route 68, Wallingford

Length: Approximately 5 miles

Canoe Access Points:.

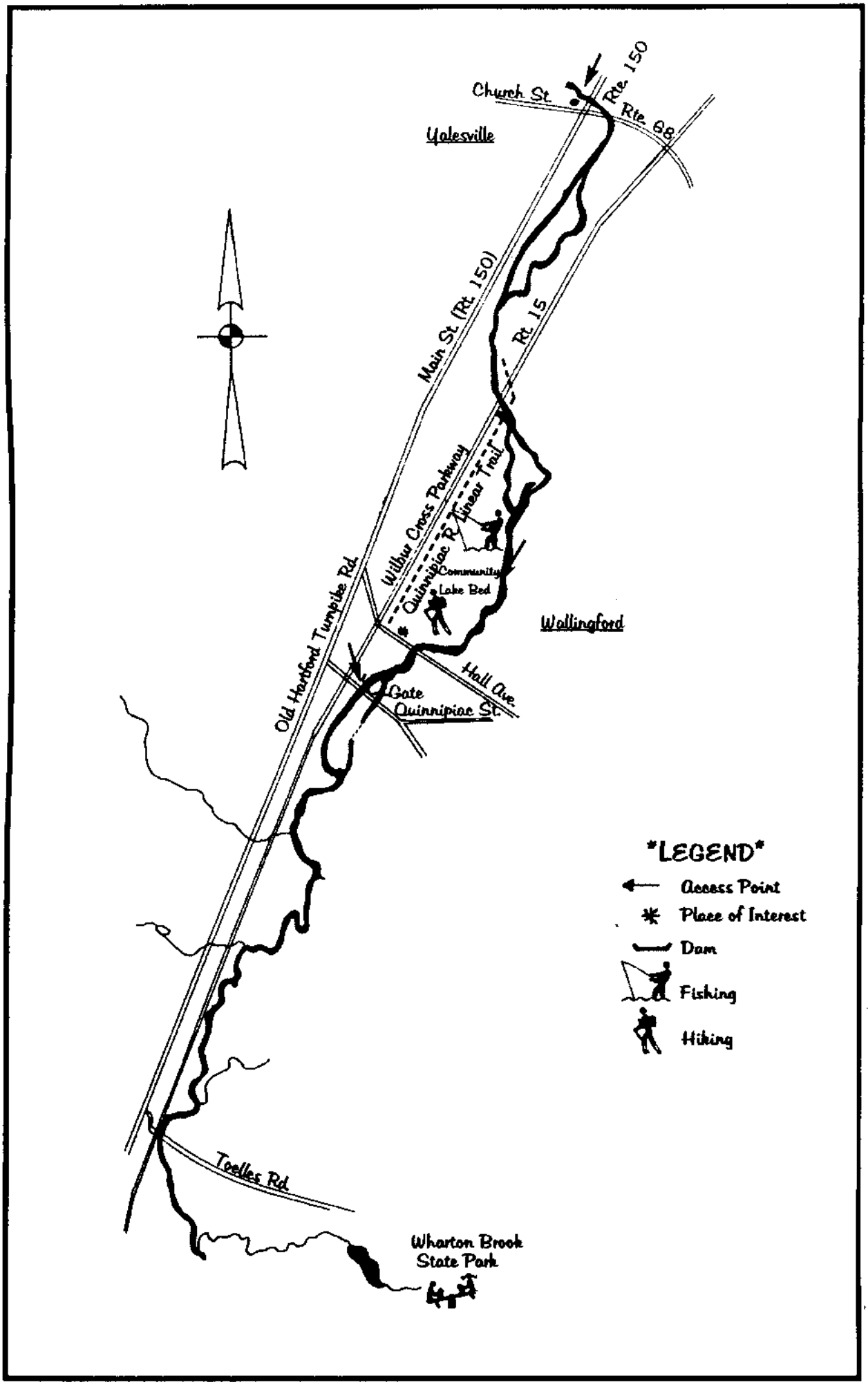
- Dossin Beach at Humane Society on Hanover Pond, South Meriden
- Prageman Park, approximately *2.5* miles downstream
- Britannia Spoon (Trout Brook Brew House) building, 5 miles downstream

Canoeing Tips:

- Easy paddling throughout.
- Approximately 2.5 to 3 hour trip.
- Portage at dam on Hanover Pond; follow the marked path to the right of dam.
- From Prageman Park one can attempt to paddle upstream to just below Hanover Dam, thus avoiding the portage, or cruise downstream to Brittania Spoon Company.
- Sandbars and fast currents present challenges between Hanover Dam & Oak Street.
- Portage is necessary at the Brittania Spoon building; the dam has been breached and the bipass channel to the left of the dam is not passable. Portage to the right of the dam. The former Brittania Spoon Restaurant is now the Trout Brook Brew House.

Notes of Interest:

During the 1800s, the cutlery industry bookended this section of the Quinnipiac. Hanover Pond was dammed for power by the Meriden Cutlery Company, while five miles downstream another dam was erected to do the same for the Brittania Spoon Company. Habershon Field was the site of an amusement park, a roller skating rink, and by some accounts a horse track. Across the pond in the late 1920s Dossin Beach was built with its Victorian bath house and fine sandy beach. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Meriden Polar Bear Club made Red Bridge the platform for their shivery wintertime plunges into the icy river below.


Church St.
Rte. 150
Rte. 68
Yalesville
Main St. (Rt. 150)
Rt. 15
Wilbur Cross Parkway
Quinnipiac R. Linear Trail
Community Lake Bed
Wallingford
Old Hartford Turnpike Rd.
Hall Ave.
Gate
Quinnipiac St.
Toelles Rd.
Wharton Brook State Park
LEGEND
Access Point
Place of Interest
Dam
Fishing
Hiking

Route 150, Yalesville to Toelles Road, Wallingford/North Haven

Length: Approximately *5.2* miles

Canoe Access Points:

- Route 150 bridge, Yalesville, S.W. corner of bridge
- Quinnipiac Street, Wallingford. Left bank near the spillway is a good location.
- Toelles Road, Wallingford/North Haven. Access is best on left downstream side of bridge. Lack of parking is a problem.

Canoeing Tips:

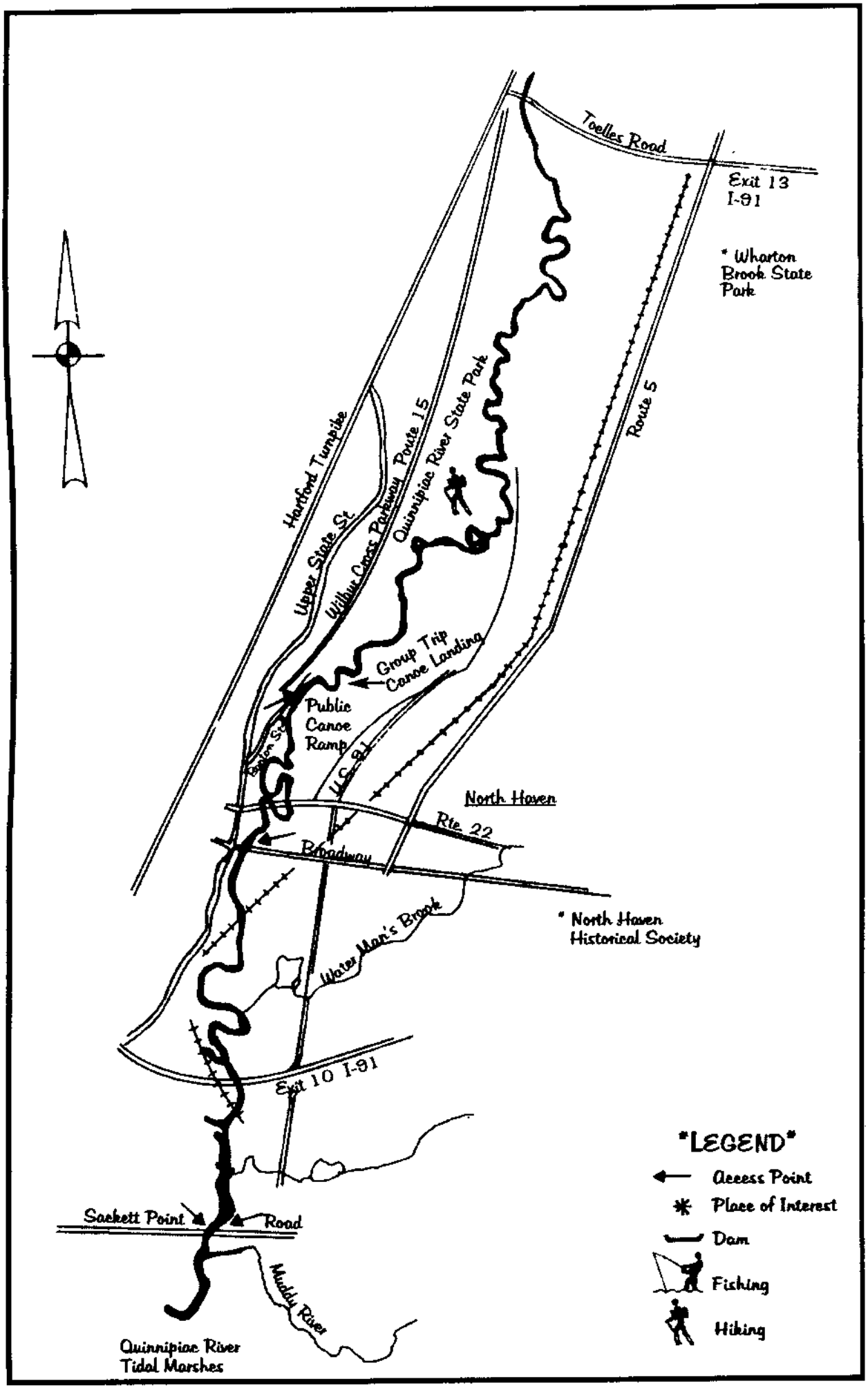
- Easy paddling throughout. The river in this stretch is generally slow-moving in a meandering and relatively flat channel. Depths are generally a few feet or less with numerous sand bars and occasional deeper channels and pools.
- Approximately 2 hour trip
- Portage around spillway at Quinnipiac Avenue on right bank.
- Shortly downstream of Route 68, the channel splits around a large island. The left channel is the more passable of the two, but it is generally shallow and may require dragging canoes over sand bars at various locations, especially during low water.
- There is a scenic stretch from Route 15 to Hall Avenue, a former lakebed, which is wide and relatively deep in most spots.
- The segment from the Quinnipiac Avenue crossing to Toelles Road may be difficult to negotiate due to several large blockages, mostly occurring downstream of the Wallingford sewage treatment plant. The channel splits into two substantially smaller channels a short distance downstream of the Wallingford sewage treatment plant discharge with the more passable of the two being to the left.

Other Activities:

Various wildflowers, wetland vegetation and wildlife can be viewed in the marshes around Community Lake Park. Many turtles lay their eggs in the sandy lakebed soil.

Notes of Interest:

For more than a century, a dam at Hall Avenue created what was known as Community Lake until the dam was breached during a storm in the late 1970s. Community Lake Park was a popular public recreation facility which declined into a state of disuse following the demise of the lake. The current river channel cuts through the former lake bed sediments, resulting in steep channel banks several feet high and composed of fine sand and silt. The broad floodplain which formed the former lake, bottom contains a variety of marsh vegetation and wildlife. The lakebed also contains three excavated ponds, dug to provide sand for the Wallingford Public Works department. The Quinnipiac River Linear Trail is being constructed near the river.


Toelles Road
Exit 13
I-91
* Wharton
Brook State
Park
Hartford Turnpike
Upper State St
Wilbur Cross Parkway
Route 15
Quinnipiac River State Park
Route 5
Group Trip
Canoe Landing
Public
Canoe
Ramp
North Haven
Rte. 22
Broadway
* North Haven
Historical Society
Water Man's Brook
Exit 10 I-91
Sackett Point Road
Muddy River
Quinnipiac River
Tidal Marshes
LEGEND
Access Point
Place of Interest
Dam
Fishing
Hiking

Toelles Road, Wallingford/North Haven to Sackett Point Road, New Haven

Length: Approximately 5.5 miles

Canoe Access Points:

- Toelles Road bridge; best access on the left, downstream side of the bridge. Lack of parking is a problem.
- New canoe ramp at Banton Street, Quinnipiac River State Park, near Rt. 15 rest area.
- Broadway Bridge (downstream of Route 22) on the left bank upstream of the bridge.
- Sackett Point Road on either bank on the upstream side of the bridge.

Canoeing Tips:

- Toelles Road to Banton Street is about 3 miles long and should take about 1.5 to 2 hours. Downed trees and logjams require portages on this section, more so when water levels are low to moderate than during spring high water periods.
- Banton Street to Sackett Point Road is about 2.5 miles and should take about 1.5 hours. This section is free of portages. The red sandstone railway bridge is passable at high tide through the right side openings. At low tide proceed with caution as the bottom is lined with brick and pilings which will not yield to canoe bottoms.
- At high tide one can paddle a significant distance up the Muddy River which enters the main channel just south of Sackett Point Road.

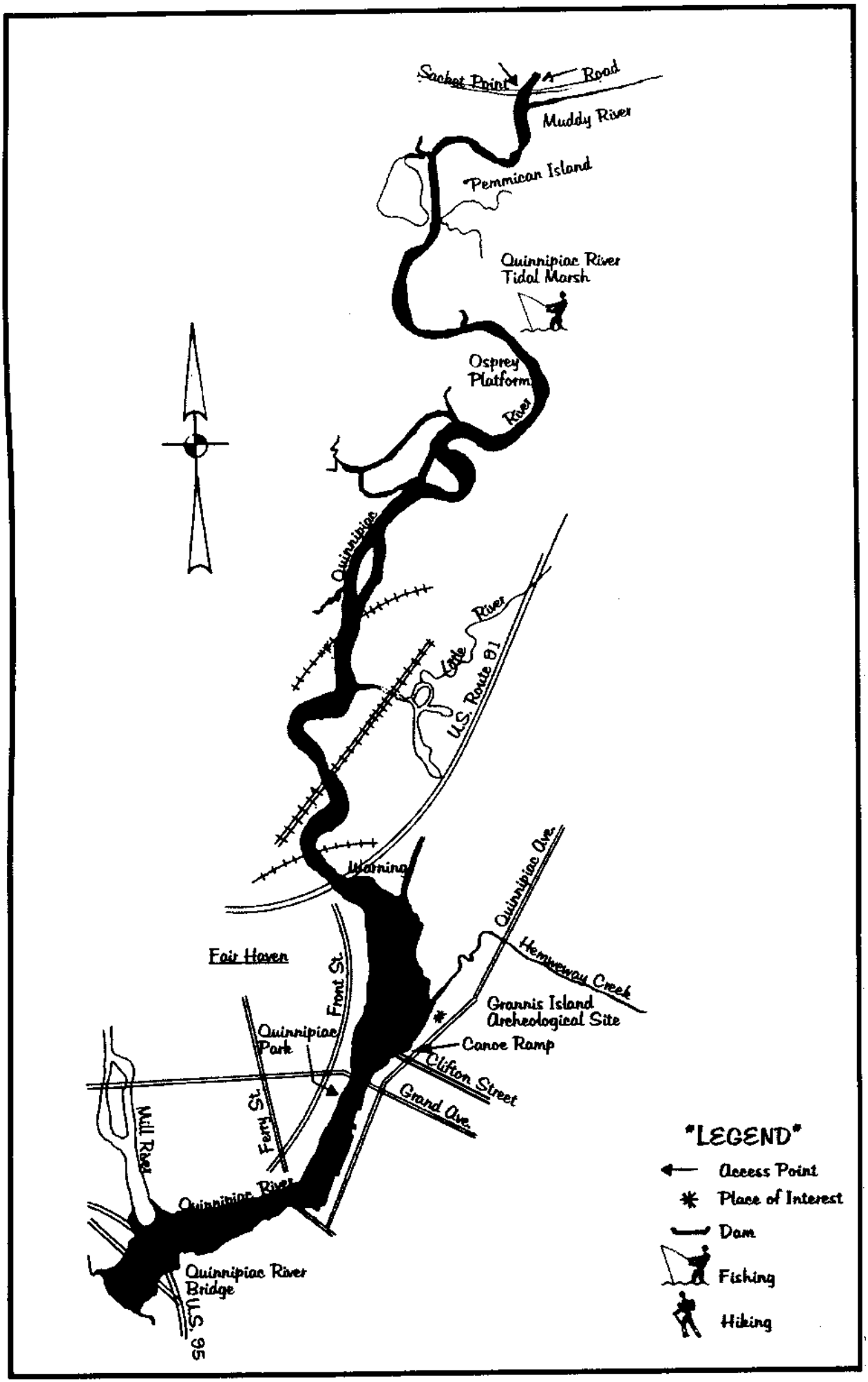
Other Activities:

Quinnipiac River State Park, which can be accessed via Banton Street, abounds with wildlife and is a state-regulated hunting area. The park is also popular with bird watchers and to a lesser extent, hikers. A Connecticut blue-blazed trail follows the right bank. Since the trail is on the floodplain, it is in only fair condition and is best hiked in late fall through late winter.

Notes of Interest:

The North Haven section of the Quinnipiac begins at the Toelles Road bridge. From Toelles Road, the river winds gently down to Banton Street. On the left side, the Quinnipiac is bounded by the North Haven sand plains. This unique terrain is vegetated with sumac, scrub oaks and desert- like grass. Small areas of the sand plains still remain intact along Route 5 and in Wharton Brook State Park. The right bank of the river is bounded by Quinnipiac River State Park. This undeveloped park was formed in the 1940s when the construction of the Wilbur Cross Parkway (Route 15) cut off these agricultural bottom lands from the homesteads on upper State Street and Hartford Turnpike.

(continued on page 20)


Socket Point
Road
Muddy River
Pemmican Island
Quinnipiac River
Tidal Marsh
Osprey
Platform
River
Quinnipiac
Lake
River
U.S. Route 61
Warning
Quinnipiac Ave.
Hemmenway Creek
Fair Haven
Front St.
Grannis Island
Archeological Site
Quinnipiac
Park
Canoe Ramp
Clifton Street
Grand Ave.
Ferry St.
Mill Road
Quinnipiac River
Quinnipiac River
Bridge
U.S. 95
"LEGEND"
Access Point
Place of Interest
Dam
Fishing
Hiking

Sackett Point Road, North Haven to Grand Avenue, New Haven

Length: Approximately 6 miles

Canoe Access Points:

- Sackett Point Road bridge.
- Clifton Street canoe ramp, north of Grand Avenue Bridge

Canoeing Tips:

- Travel time is about two to three hours.
- Paddling is easy. This section is an estuary, a wide, deep channel and slow-moving water which is affected by sun, wind and tide. High tide at Sackett Point follows New Haven Harbor by two hours. Plan to put in an hour before high tide at Sackett Point Road to ensure adequate water for side trips.
- Where the river is constricted at the Middletown Avenue Bridge the current is fast and treacherous, with turbulence by pilings. Conditions are safest at slack tide.

Notes of Interest:

Much of this area is the state-owned Quinnipiac Meadows Wildlife Area. As with the prior stretch, this area features former WPA mosquito drainage canals and is commonly trapped for muskrats. Two features of interest, which are accessible only by canoe, are Pemican Island, about one mile downstream, and a point of land a short distance further which extends from the right bank behind Home Depot/Office Max. Bald eagles winter in this area. These areas at one time were the site of brick factories which used nearby clay pits for raw materials and hardwood forests to supply the kilns. Ancient tree remnants dating back 7,000 years have been found in old clay diggings from the area. Nesting ospreys may be observed on the left bank in an old light tower downstream of the abandoned Cedar Hill railroad yards, and on osprey platforms recently erected by the QRWA in the salt marshes. Osprey fledglings have been sighted on these platforms by QRWA volunteers every summer since 1994. Since 1995 the QRWA has conducted breeding bird surveys by canoe in the marsh for the CTDEP Wildlife Division, using a tape player to draw out secretive species. The surveys have documented many clapper and Virginia rails, and even several rare, state-listed species: least bittern, moorhen, and king rail.

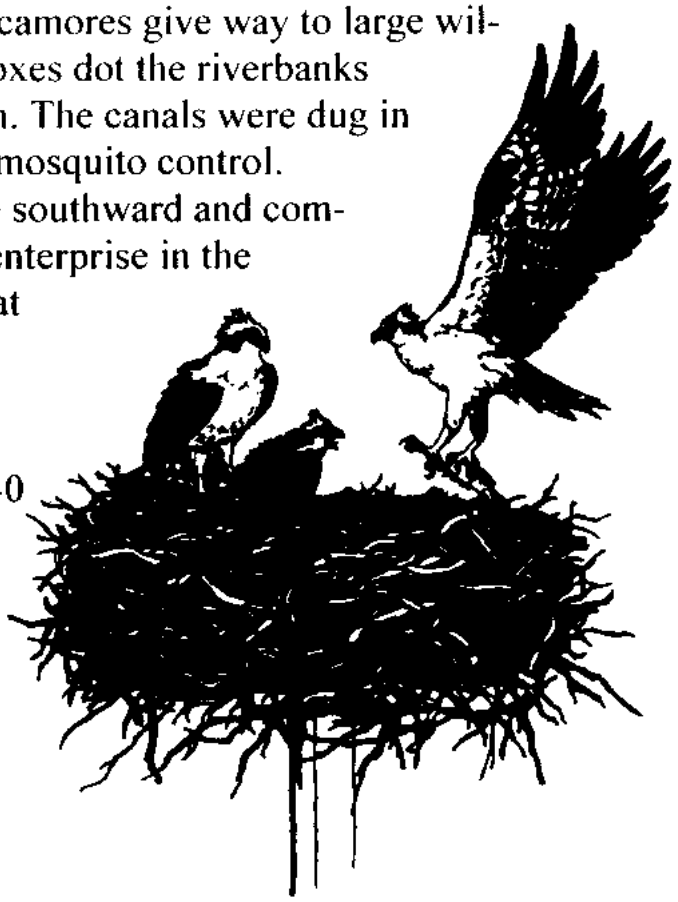
Toelles Rd., Wallingford (continued)

Several industrial parks are visible on the left bank of this stretch. About halfway to Banton Street are the Pratt & Whitney athletic fields. Approaching Banton Street one can see a pine grove on the west bank. These pines were planted in the 1920s, after the red sandstone ridge proved unyielding to the plow.

The Banton Street area was once an active summer community which acquired the nickname "Little Savin Rock". Seawalls and docks are still visible along the banks. During the post-World War II era, new homes were built and old homes were winterized for year-round use. However, chronic flooding of the area, which is located in the river's floodplain, resulted in a State buy-out of homes in the early 1970s. This modern-day ghost town is now part of Quinnipiac River State Park. Several large beech trees carry the initials of children long since grown and moved away, and the small beaches there now are void of summertime bathers.

Downstream of the Route 22 overpass. is the Old Pines Bridge, now called Broadway Bridge. Below Broadway is the Red Sandstone Railway Bridge. Immediately below that bridge is the former site of the Stiles Brick Company. Many old bricks still can be found in the area downstream.

At this point, the river changes its character as upland woodlands give way to cattail marsh and sycamores give way to large willow trees. Wood duck nesting boxes dot the riverbanks and canals cut through the marsh. The canals were dug in the 1930s as a WPA project for mosquito control. Muskrats are plentiful from here southward and commercial trapping is still a small enterprise in the marshes. The Quinnipiac muskrat was prized in the New York market for its good quality and very large size.



Passing beneath Route 40 and a railroad trestle bridge, the river widens approaching Sackett Point Road.

About the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association

The Quinnipiac River Watershed Association was formed in 1979 by a group of concerned citizens from the watershed area who wanted to see the quality of the river improved and the river protected from further degradation. The group set the goal of increasing the public's awareness about the Quinnipiac River and its value as a natural resource. This is being accomplished through educational programs, encouraging recreational use of the river, sponsoring citizen action activities such as river clean-ups and advocating for strong wetland and watercourse protection. An extensive study on the overall condition of the river was completed in 1981 by the South Central Regional Planning Agency and was used to set some of the group's initial goals.

Since then, the QRWA has successfully educated and worked with thousands of residents and corporations throughout the Quinnipiac River Basin through programs such as:
* educational lectures on river conservation issues * guided canoe and hiking trips* an annual canoe race * limiting water diversions and development in the basin * an Adopt-the-River Program that encourages residents to report potential problems and monitor the health of tributary streams * river clean-ups * trout stocking * wildlife management projects * working with local conservation groups and schools * and much more!

The QRWA stays involved at the regional and state level, as well. We are an active participant in the Quinnipiac River Watershed Partnership (QRWP), a collaborative effort which includes representatives from state and federal agencies including CT DEP, USEPA, USGS, and USDA, as well as the municipalities, Yale, and citizens at large. QRWA also works with the Rivers Alliance of Connecticut, a state-wide rivers advocacy group.

The QRWA office is presently located in downtown Meriden. It employs an Executive Director and a science educator and its volunteer board of directors meets monthly to plan programs and work to protect the river and support the needs of a growing non-profit organization. The public is always welcome to get involved with the QRWA and volunteers are always needed to implement programs and help with events. Board meetings are open to all and are held on the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at 99 Colony Street, Meriden (above the Cabin Restaurant), (203) 237-2237.

Acknowledgments

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The Quinnipiac River Watershed