

FRIENDS OF THE MOSSHASSUCK: OLNEY POND, LINCOLN WOODS



LEVEL	Beginner
START/END	Boat Launch
POND SIZE	128 acre pond
TIME	2 hours
DESCRIPTION	Flatwater pond
SCENERY	Wooded
GPS	41° 53' 21.77" N, 71° 25' 41.52" W

OLNEY POND, LINCOLN WOODS

Lincoln Woods State Park has two ponds that are worth the paddle, Olney Pond and Barney Pond. Olney Pond is the focus of the park, with a swimming beach  and concessions stands right off Route 146. It is also accessible by the #54 bus running up Louisquisset Pike. One of the newer concessions at the Park is the rental of kayaks adjacent to the beach, so even if you do not have a boat you can canoe this pond. Check with the park on fees and access. One can launch human powered boats along the beach  and from the boat launch site  at the other end of the pond. The woods and hills surrounding the pond are beautiful and only

electric motors are allowed, so it is relatively quiet as well.

Small islands dot this 126-acre pond in Lincoln Woods State Park. This short and pleasant paddle is best at off-peak hours because Lincoln Woods State Park is close to downtown Providence and gets busy in summer and on weekends. Aside from the recreational facilities of Lincoln Woods State Park this area is undeveloped. The shores of Olney Pond are surrounded by dense woodland filled with red and white oak, dogwood, hickory, and red maple as well as ferns and wildflowers. The pond's edge is lined with granite and quartz boulders. Migratory waterfowl such as cormorants, mallards, American black ducks, mergansers, and ring-necked ducks stop at the pond during migrating seasons.

Olney Pond, named after one of the area's principal families, is more man-made than natural. In the early 1800s, the Olney's created a dam  at the eastern end of their property offering a fall of water sufficient to run a thread mill about a century before the park was created. The Thread Mill Brook leads southeasterly from the dam to other ponds along the Moshassuck as it lopes its way towards Providence.



MOSHASSUCK

In 1997, Friends of the Moshassuck was founded because the little river flowing into downtown Providence from the north really needed some friends. In March 2006, Friends of the Moshassuck was designated the official Watershed Council for the Moshassuck and its tributary, the West River, by the Rhode Island Rivers Council.



THE MOSHASSUCK RIVER

The Moshassuck is a tiny watershed, only 23 square miles extending from the Limerock section of Lincoln RI about 10 miles to where it meets with the Woonasquatucket River in the tidewater of downtown Providence and forms the Providence River.

The Narragansett Indians gave the river its name, Mooshausick, meaning the river where moose watered. In 1636 Roger Williams, European founder of Rhode Island, settled on the East bank of the river and learned its name from the Narragansetts. The Moshassuck is joined by its major tributary, the West River, about a mile from the center of Providence. The headwaters are only ten miles away in Lincoln. Between the two cities, the river has five ponds, a reservoir, and 11 dams.

The dams and ponds are the river's industrial heritage. As early as 1646 the first grist mill was set up on the Moshassuck near Smith street in Providence. During the 1700's the river saw tanneries, slaughter houses, coopers, a paper mill, and a chocolate factory along its banks. In 1828 five years of construction on the lower Moshassuck completed the Blackstone Canal. The canal thrived for 20 years and served the communities between Worcester and Providence. On November 9th, 1848 the canal received its last paying freight. The railroads had arrived and made the canal obsolete. High granite walls along the river between Charles Street and Citizen's Plaza are the only remains of the canal visible today on the lower Moshassuck.

The factories, transportation and housing along the river all used the Moshassuck to dispose of industrial and human waste.

So much in fact, the Providence cholera epidemics in 1833, 1849, and 1854 were blamed on contamination of the Moshassuck River.

These days the river is much cleaner than in the heyday of pollution, though it still has a long way to go. The surrounding watershed also cries out for the restoration of the ecosystems that support the community. The upper part of the watershed is primarily forested and suburban. The lower part is completely urbanized and a greater percentage of the Moshassuck Watershed is paved than any other in the state.

Due to its small size and quick rise and fall, the Moshassuck is not renowned as a paddling river. Access is limited, it is full of rocks and trash, and long stretches of the river are underground.

DIRECTIONS

From Route 146 North take the Twin River Road exit and turn left at the end of the ramp. **From Route 146 South** take the Twin River Road exit and turn right at the end of the ramp.

Follow Twin River Road into Lincoln Woods State Park and when you come to the T-junction just inside the park turn right. Follow this one-way road for 1.4 miles, past the large parking lot for the beach and on around the pond to where there is a marked turn-off on the left for the boat ramp. To get back out of the park you can continue to follow the one-way park loop road around the pond back to the entrance. You can also get to the boat ramp by coming in the entrance from Route 123, Great Road.

ALWAYS WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET AND CARRY A WHISTLE OR OTHER SOUND PRODUCING DEVICE, PREFERABLY ATTACHED TO YOUR LIFE JACKET. PADDLERS SHOULD CHECK WATER LEVEL AND TIDES, WEATHER, AND WATERWAY CONDITIONS PRIOR TO EVERY TRIP. REMOVE WHAT YOU BRING, CLEAN UP MORE IF YOU CAN. PLEASE RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY. REPORT ANY PROBLEMS YOU ENCOUNTER TO FRIENDS OF THE MOSHASSUCK AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IF APPROPRIATE.

Friends of the Moshassuck has a vision of a greenway linking the sights we have found to restore with those already protected sights in the Moshassuck watershed. Friends of the Moshassuck, in addition to restoring sites along the river, has a focus on the ecology/economy interface — in other words a great interest in how restoring the health of ecosystems can help communities achieve prosperity. www.themoshassuck.org

The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP) protects and preserves Narragansett Bay and its watershed through partnerships that conserve and restore natural resources, enhance water quality and promote community involvement. NBEP supports the RI Blueways Alliance which is dedicated to creating a comprehensive water trail network to link Rhode Island's rivers, lakes and ponds to Narragansett Bay and to the rivers in Massachusetts that flow into the bay. The trail will be used to promote safety, conservation, recreation and economic development. www.ExploreRI.org



Watershed organizations throughout the Narragansett Bay watershed showcase paddling opportunities on downloadable paddle maps. The full list of maps is available at ExploreRI.org.

