

KICKEMUIT RIVER TRAIL: WARREN LOOP



MAP LEGEND			
	WATER ACCESS		POINTS OF INTEREST
	WATER		WATER TRAIL ROUTE
	ROADS		WETLANDS
	PARKING		CONSERVATION LAND

LEVEL	Beginner
START/END	Barker Avenue
RIVER MILES	4.75 mile loop
TIME	1.5 hours for loop
DESCRIPTION	Flat Water, Class I
SCENERY	Historic, wetlands
ACCESS	One portage from Barker Avenue for loop; Harris Avenue for one way trip with limited parking (3 cars maximum).

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Barker Avenue offers easy but wet portage. The river in this area is generally calm. Large boulders strewn just south of Barker Avenue are the remnants of the railroad passing known locally as 2 The Broken Bridge. The Providence-Bristol-Warren rail line operated here until the Hurricane of 1938 destroyed this bridge. From the bridge eastward is the newly completed Warren Bike Path.

Across the River south of The Broken Bridge and Warren Bike Path is an 18 acre parcel of land called 3 The Meadows. Sensitive wetlands here surround a scenic field of upland (a great spot for picnics). Warren's Conservation Commission installed an osprey nest and the osprey pair nesting in The Meadows has successfully raised five broods. These birds migrate to South America for the winter and return to the same nests each year.

On the eastern edge of the river is 4 Hugh Cole's Well. In 1677, Hugh Cole (1627-1699), a shipwright and engineer, built a house here, and the well now remains just north of the Warren Bike Path. Before King Philip's War, Cole lived in Swansea when two of his sons were taken hostage. Metacom had the sons released, and warned Cole that he and his family should leave. After the war, Cole built his Warren house on the bank of the Kickemuit and lived there for more than 20 years.

Warren has actively conserved its historic farms for decades, and now has over 700 acres in conserved lands. The historic Kee Farm 5, remains a private, active farm and cows can be seen along the water here. To the south of the farm is Touisset Marsh, preserved by the Audubon Society. Paddlers should be wary of sensitive nesting areas and avoid the shoreline. Chase Cove, the inlet past the marsh, is an old oyster bed which provides attractive area for resting and enjoying the view.

Visible on both sides of the Kickemuit are Warren's summer cottage neighborhoods, Laurel Park 6 on the west and Touisset Point/Highlands 7 on the east. In the late 1800s, summer homes sprouted along the Kickemuit River, boosted by the construction of the Touisset Tennis Club in 1919. Now all of these neighborhoods have primarily converted to year round use.



KICKEMUIT RIVER

The Warren loop, starting just south of Route 103 offers a quiet paddle along 6 miles of conserved land and quaint shoreline residences. The longer Bristol-Warren loop offers sweeping views of Mt. Hope Bay and Touisset Point before entering the southern entrance to the river, known as the Bristol Narrows, and then integrating with the Warren loop.



KICKEMUIT RIVER IN HISTORY

Wampanoag people named this river Kickemuit, which is thought to mean “at the large spring.” The towns of Warren and Bristol now occupy the original site of the Pokanoket village “Montaup”, which formed part of the Wampanoag Confederacy led by the Massasoit (Great Sachem) Ousamequin. The Wampanoag began trading with Englishmen from Plimoth Colony when a post was established on the western bank of the Kickemuit in 1632. The English settlers eventually bought land along the Kickemuit from the Wampanoag in 1653, but the relationship between the Wampanoag tribe and the English settlers was always uneasy. Ousamequin’s son Metacom (also known as King Philip) inherited the role of Sachem in 1662. Metacom opposed the imposition of the ever-expanding English colonies, the spread of illnesses brought by settlers, constant threats, legal disputes and the exploitation of natural resources.

In 1675, war between the Wampanoags and the English (known as “King Philip’s War”) began at the Kickemuit River when a band of Pokanokets looted and vandalized several English houses. An Englishmen named John Salisbury shot and wounded one of the warriors. The warriors returned again, killing Salisbury and six other settlers. Seven days later the severed heads of these men were found mounted on poles on the banks of the Kickemuit River. These stories provide fodder for popular ghost tales. With the end of King Philip’s War in 1677, English settlers once again returned to the River and evidence of this new settlement can be seen on the eastern edge with Hugh Cole’s Well.

A century later, as the towns of Warren and Bristol fought in the American Revolution, the row galley “Washington” was sent to protect the entrance to the Kickemuit River near the Bristol Narrows. In 1777, an explosion on the galley killed eight men. The bodies of the victims of this accident were buried on the western shore of Kickemuit River near the “narrows” of the stream, not far from the scene of the disaster.

ECOLOGY OF THE KICKEMUIT RIVER

Kickemuit River is one of the smaller tributaries to Narragansett Bay. The River is relatively shallow, ranging from 5 feet to the north and along the shore to a depth of about 16 feet in the lower interior sections. As a tidal river, crabs and schools of fish are visible along the Barker Avenue portage. The River is generally open for shellfish harvesting. Blueback herring, alewives and American shad utilize the River for spawning and nursery grounds, while Atlantic Menhaden and Silversides migrate here in the summer.

The northern portion of the Kickemuit River is an important migratory area for stopover and over-wintering bird species. Osprey are flourishing and various owl species have been seen. The fields on the eastern shores offer an ideal bird habitat, providing both cover in the hedgerow borders and foraging in open fields. The variety of habitats—agricultural fields, forest, open water, freshwater and saltwater—support deer, fox, raccoon, opossum, coyote, woodchuck, and birds such as eastern meadow lark, sparrows, red-tailed hawk, ring-necked pheasant, killdeer, woodpeckers, orchard oriole, cardinal, owls and many others.

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 THE KICKEMUIT RIVER COUNCIL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IF APPROPRIATE.



The Kickemuit River is one of four rivers flowing into Mount Hope Bay, the northeastern corner of Narragansett Bay. The Kickemuit River Council (KRC) is an all volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) representative organization founded in 1973, dedicated to preservation, protection, and improvement of the river. www.kickemuitriver.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.

