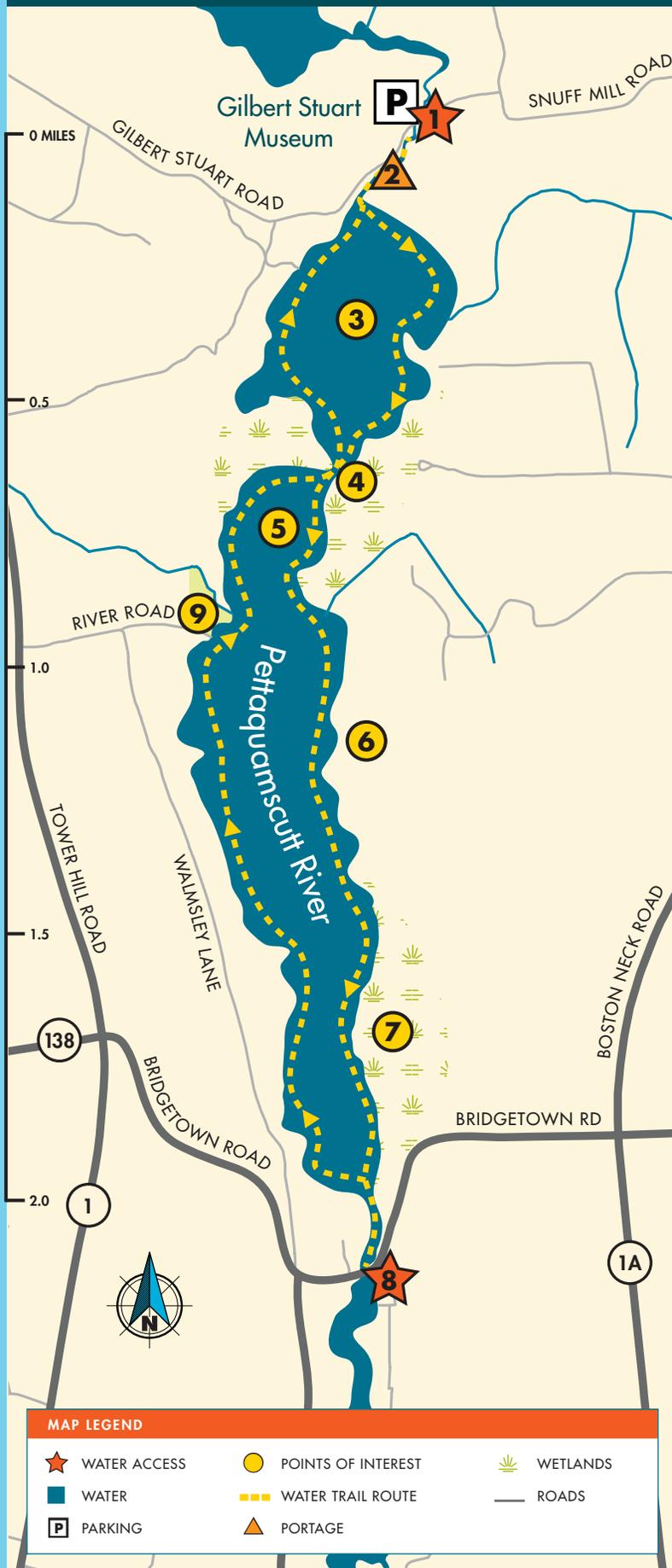


NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION: UPPER PETTAQUAMSCUTT RIVER



LEVEL	Beginner to Intermediate
START/END	Gilbert Stuart Birthplace & Museum
RIVER MILES	4.5 miles roundtrip
TIME	Approximately 2 hours for the loop
DESCRIPTION	Flatwater, Tidal
SCENERY	Coastal woodlands, residential neighborhoods
ACCESS	Unimproved, rough natural access

ACCESS POINTS

Start this loop from either the lower parking lot across from Gilbert Stuart Birthplace & Museum on Gilbert Stuart Road or the small lot southeast of the Bridgetown Bridge (a.k.a. Lacey Bridge) on Pettaquamscutt Ave. The lower lot across from Gilbert Stuart Birthplace is privately owned by the Museum. If there is no big event planned, they do not mind kayakers using the launch. A small donation or a paid visit to the museum or gift shop is greatly appreciated. The upper lot is reserved for their groups and is off-limits. The launch at the end of Pettaquamscutt Ave. has limited parking on the roadside for up to 5 cars (without trailers). There are no official tide charts for Narrow River, but typical tides for this area run about 3-4 hours later tidal times at Narragansett Pier.

EXPLORING THE UPPER PETTAQUAMSCUTT

This particular loop explores the upper reaches of the Narrow River Watershed, including Gilbert Stuart Stream (shallow), the Upper Pond and the Lower Pond . While the Lower Narrow River is very shallow and completely surrounded by salt marsh, the Upper Narrow River is mostly woodland and residential, giving paddlers the sense that they are in an entirely different watershed. Begin your paddle by navigating the narrow and shallow Gilbert Stuart Stream where you may have to exit your kayak at times. We suggest water shoes when paddling anywhere within the watershed. Heading south along the eastern shore of the Upper Pond, watch for osprey in the late spring, summer, and early fall and bald eagles during winter and early spring. Pass through Casey's Sill , a shallow sandbar between the Upper and Lower Ponds named for nearby Casey Farm (c. 1750) and continue south by Pettaquamscutt Lake Shores and Edgewater to Bridgetown (Lacey) Bridge . Pass under the bridge if you wish to exit at Pettaquamscutt Avenue. Otherwise, turn around and head north on the western shore to continue the loop. This stretch takes you along a steep wooded hillside. While they are neither visible nor accessible from the water, Hannah

Continued on the back >>>>



NARROW RIVER

The Pettaquamscutt River – aka Narrow River – forms a natural boundary between the towns of Narragansett, South Kingstown, and North Kingstown. Not truly a river, it is an approximately 7 mile long tidal inlet connected by a narrow channel to a series of kettle basins fed by a small stream. Although mostly shallow, it does have two unusually steep-sided ponds, one of which plunges to a maximum depth of approximately 60 feet.



PHOTO: JOHN McNAMARA

Robinson rock is a short distance northeast of Hannah Robinson Tower on Rt. 1 in South Kingstown. It is an outcrop comprised of 600 million year old granite gneiss on the eastern edge of McSparran Hill and part of the former Glebe Farm owned by the Rev. James McSparran in the mid-18th century. Today, McSparran's house survives only as an archaeological site on Walmsley Lane. Continue paddling north past the URI Boathouse , where the University's crew team can be seen rowing at different times throughout the year, back through Casey's Sill and Gilbert Stuart Stream to your starting point.

NARROW RIVER GEOLOGY AND THE OVERTURN OF 2007

The last great ice sheet began to recede from Rhode Island 23,000 years ago, then left the Narrow River Watershed by 20,000 years ago and was gone from Rhode Island by 18,500 years ago. The Upper and Lower Ponds of Narrow River, separated by shallow Casey's Sill, are two deep ice-block basins. After deglaciation, both basins contained freshwater lakes. The Lower Pond has 1000 years of history recorded by freshwater varves. Varves are couplets of sediment known to have been deposited in one year. The ocean waters flooded into the Narrow River basin about 2500 years ago and filled the freshwater lakes with marine waters.

Most of the time the water of the ponds are 3 layers: a lighter, fresher layer on top; next a denser, saltier, layer, and below is an even saltier, denser bottom water layer that is naturally without oxygen but high in hydrogen sulfide. In October of 2007 a natural,

but unusual, event occurred in Upper Pond. On the evening of Friday, Oct 12, 2007 the URI Women's Crew Team was out practicing on Narrow River and noticed an unpleasant smell, like rotten eggs. During this event the bottom waters of the Upper Pond came to the surface and mixed with the oxygenated water in the upper water column. The water turned milky-white to yellow in color due to the hydrogen sulfide. The water contained little or no oxygen, it was saltier, and there were unusual species of the microscopic phytoplankton. The air had hydrogen sulfide in it, which is unpleasant to humans but is not concentrated enough to cause health problems. The last time an overturn happened was in Oct. 1990. Previous overturns that were documented in November 1972 and in November 1957.

ABOUT GILBERT STUART BIRTHPLACE

Unlike most areas in Rhode Island, the Narrow River Watershed was not heavily industrialized because the watershed lacked streams large enough to generate power for large factories. But the main freshwater source, Gilbert Stuart Stream, had enough flow to power a snuff mill. The Stuart Family Snuff mill, started in 1750 and the first in the American colonies, ground locally grown tobacco to snuff, often for export. Their son, Gilbert, was born there and is best known for his "Athenaeum portrait" of George Washington seen on the U.S. one dollar bill.

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 NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IF APPROPRIATE.



The Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) works to preserve, protect, and restore the natural environment and the quality of life for all communities within the Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River Estuary and Watershed. www.narrowriver.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.

