

# PAWTUXET RIVER AUTHORITY & WATERSHED COUNCIL

## RHODES TO PAWTUXET COVE



<b>LEVEL</b>	Intermediate (at high tide), otherwise Advanced
<b>START/END</b>	Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet / Aspray Boat House
<b>RIVER MILES</b>	2 miles round trip
<b>TIME</b>	1 to 2 hours
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Flat until the falls, variable with tide through falls, calm to light chop in Pawtuxet Cove
<b>SCENERY</b>	Wooded, historic village, and marine coastal
<b>GPS</b>	N 41° 46' 2.51", W 71° 23' 45.82"

### RHODES ON THE PAWTUXET TO ASPRAY BOAT HOUSE

Before heading downstream toward Pawtuxet Cove, you might explore upriver from put-in at Rhodes **1**. Within 0.5 miles, the current may become quite strong, encouraging you to turn back.

From Rhodes heading downstream it is about 0.4 miles to the mouth of the river and falls. If you decide not to venture into the Cove, the section between Rhodes and the falls is easy and intriguing. Behemoth boulders **2** have emerged since the dam was removed and the water level has dropped 3 feet. You can also see shoreline impacts of the dam removal and river restoration work with plantings of native vegetation along the banks.

Passage through the falls **3** is best done **during high**

**tide**, especially if you plan a return trip to Rhodes. Before your trip, view the falls from the bridge at different tides, and consult this tide chart for Pawtuxet Cove: <http://tinyurl.com/usgpawtuxcovetide>.

As you approach the mouth of the river, the current should be slow moving. Stay toward the right near the flat rock ledge as you pass through the falls, then head for the bridge arch on the right. The falls change with the tide from flat and pond-like with ripples (high tide) to a drop of up to three feet and fast white water (low tide). The natural bedrock of the falls continues under the bridge, so be alert until you have passed through. From the cove, you should be able to paddle back into the river at or close to high tide but, once the tide starts going out, the current may quickly become too strong. If the current is strong, try paddling through the arch and pulling yourself along the bridge abutment and river's edge to your left until you reach the ledge, then portage around the falls and into the river.

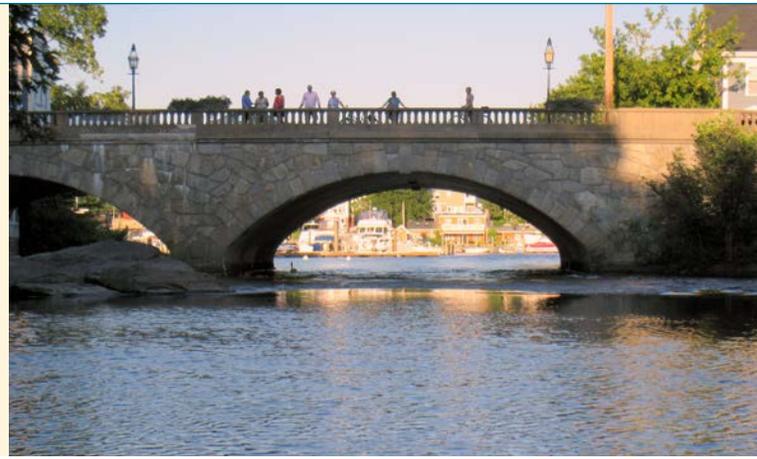
If staying in the cove, paddle to your right south of the bridge for ¼ mile to the Aspray Boat House **4**, where you will find the boat ramp just past the boathouse. The boat house has a great

*Continued on the back >>>*



## PAWTUXET RIVER

The Pawtuxet River watershed is the largest of Rhode Island's watersheds within the state's boundaries. With its headwaters in the hills of western Rhode Island, the river's North Branch flows generally west to east for 17 miles from the Gainer Dam in Scituate, and enters Narragansett Bay at Pawtuxet Cove.



view of Pawtuxet Cove and south toward the Providence River and upper Narragansett Bay.

Pawtuxet Cove is protected by a breakwater **5**, so paddling in the cove should not be too challenging. Do keep an eye out for sail and power boats.

### HISTORICAL NOTES

"Pawtuxet" meaning "where the fresh water meets the salt water" derives its name from the Narragansett (Algonquian) language. Prior to English settlement along the lower Pawtuxet in 1638, the Pawtuxet Band of the Narragansett Nation lived, fished, hunted and planted here. When the first English families arrived they made the Pawtuxet Purchase on the southern side of the river (Warwick) from Saconoco, leader of the Pawtuxet Band of the Narragansetts. Roger Williams bought land on the northern side of river that now comprises Providence and much of Cranston. A wooden dam and grist mill were constructed at the falls by Stephen Arnold and Zachariah Rhodes soon thereafter.

Pawtuxet Village became a leading Rhode Island seaport by the time of the American Revolution, and the nearby burning of the British schooner Gaspee is cited as one of the first acts of colonial resistance, commemorated annually in the village.

Rhodes on the Pawtuxet was originally built in 1872 by the Thomas Rhodes family. Now on the National Register, this once famous dance hall and boat house drew people from all over New England, and spawned the establishment of several canoe clubs along the lower Pawtuxet.

The summer of 2011 saw the historic removal of the Pawtuxet Falls dam at the mouth of the river, thereby, restoring anadromous fish runs to the Lower Pawtuxet. In the spring of 2012, RIDEM began a multi-year stocking program for river herring and American shad to help re-establish their migratory cycle.

Pawtuxet Park, where the Aspray Boathouse is located, overlooks Pawtuxet Cove, and is a popular picnic area and concert venue. It is the focal point of the Gaspee Days celebration and hosts a colonial encampment every June.

Pawtuxet Village maintains much of its historic charm and is a great place to visit after your paddle.

### DIRECTIONS

Rhodes on the Pawtuxet is at 60 Rhodes Place off of Broad Street in Cranston. The quickest way to Rhodes is I-95 Exit 14A to Rte. 37 East. Follow 37 East to Post Road North. Take Post Road North for 2.75 miles into Pawtuxet Village. Take a left at light onto Narragansett Pkwy. (At this light, you can see Pawtuxet Park and Aspray Boat House across the street). Proceed over the bridge and through the Pawtuxet Village for 0.4 mile. Take left on Rhodes Place at Gazebo and proceed downhill to back parking lot and river.

If shuttling between the put-in at Rhodes and the take-out at the Aspray Boat House, it is 5 to 10 minutes by car.

Please be mindful that Rhodes on the Pawtuxet is a private facility that permits public access to the river. Help us be good stewards of their property so this access remains available.

**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 PAWTUXET RIVER AUTHORITY AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IF APPROPRIATE.**



The Pawtuxet River Authority was established by statute in 1972, has 501(c)(3) status, and maintains designation as the Pawtuxet River Watershed Council by the RI Rivers Council. PRAWC engages in open space conservation and restoration projects, develops trails and river access points, and sponsors environmental clean-ups, flood response, and advocacy efforts throughout the watershed. [www.pawtuxet.org](http://www.pawtuxet.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](http://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](http://ExploreRI.org).

