

# WOOD-PAWCATUCK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

## UPPER WOOD RIVER



MAP LEGEND			
	WATER ACCESS		PORTAGE
	WATER		PARKING
	CAUTION		CONSERVATION LAND
	POINTS OF INTEREST		
	ROADS		

LEVEL	Intermediate Plus
START	Wood River Put-in, Arcadia Management Area, Exeter
END	Wyoming Pond Fishing Access, Bridge Street, Wyoming
RIVER MILES	7.5 miles
TIME	3 to 4 hours
DESCRIPTION	Flat Water, Class I Rapids, One Portage
SCENERY	Sinuous river, forests, wetlands, very few houses
ACCESS	Steps down moderate bank

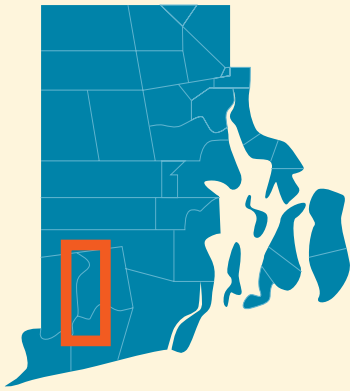
### UPPER WOOD RIVER: ARCADIA MANAGEMENT AREA TO WYOMING POND

The Upper Wood River paddle offers the most impressive natural experience of any river in RI. For almost four miles paddlers can enjoy the serenity of being surrounded by woods and forest before any houses come into view. This section snakes through many wetland areas, winding continuously to keep paddlers on their toes.

Just after the put-in at Arcadia Management Area Wood River Launch off Rt. 165 in Exeter is a rocky area with a series of class I rapids . These are passable during higher water levels, but boats will scrape the river bottom at low water. After the confluence with Parris Brook bear left at the fork around an island. A tricky set of class I rapids lies just below the fork, with some large rocks and a quick turn to the right at the end.

Deep Hole and The Pines Fishing Accesses have wooden steps leading down to the river, constructed by the Narragansett Chapter of Trout Unlimited to protect the banks from erosion. Both sites can be reached by car from side roads off of Blitzkrieg Trail in Hope Valley. The Wood River empties into Frying Pan Pond through three different channels. This large open marsh is prime habitat for many plants and wildlife. In 4.5 miles, the WPWA Campus and a public dock for take-outs are both on river right. For safety reasons, paddlers cannot run the Barberville dam or mill race at any water level. \*For an easy trip you can put-in at the dock and paddle upstream to Frying Pan Pond and back. This requires no shuttling and is perfect for the novice paddler.

Portage on river right across Arcadia Road to a foot path leading down to the river . There is a short section of quick water over a rocky area as soon as you reach the main stem of the river. A possible take-out is located just before the Skunk Hill Road Bridge , up a steep bank on river right. Otherwise, cross Wyoming Pond by hugging the left bank of the river to get to the small beach and parking lot area at the Wyoming Fishing Access .



## WOOD RIVER

The Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) was established in 1983 in response to a groundswell of interest generated by a National Park Service study conducted that year, which identified the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers as "...unique and irreplaceable resources."



### WOOD RIVER

The Wood River is RI's premier river for fishing and paddling. According to a study by the National Parks Service, the Wood River has the highest biodiversity of any river in New England. It has been recommended for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The Nature Conservancy has identified this watershed as the last contiguously forested area between Boston and New York. The Wood River is one of the most pristine stream networks in southern New England. Native plants and animals can be seen along the river all year long. The clean cold waters of the Wood River support native brook trout, freshwater mussels, and rare dragonflies. Besides the Class I Rapids, this section of river offers many challenges due to strong currents, overhanging trees, woody debris, and tricky navigation. River conditions related to blowdowns can be found on-line at [www.wpw.org/river.php](http://www.wpw.org/river.php). Be sure to stop at the WPWA Campus at the Barberville Dam for a lunch break.

### HISTORY

Native Americans first occupied the Wood River watershed soon after the retreat of the glaciers, about 25,000 years ago. In the winter they used in-land areas such as the Rattlesnake Ledge in West Greenwich, near the Wood River headwaters, and migrated to the coast in warmer months. European settlement began in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, primarily with farms and small villages. Dams along the river provided power for sawmills,

gristmills and carding mills. In the nineteenth century these mills were converted into larger industrial complexes. The Barberville Dam near the WPWA Campus was constructed in 1882 to provide power for a saw mill. The property was later developed into textile mills with buildings on both sides of the river. A mill race and stone foundations can still be seen along the river right portage path.

### ECOLOGY

The intermixing of various cover types along the Wood River, ranging from open water to marsh to shrub and wood swamp are highly attractive to wildlife, particularly waterfowl and other wetland birds which use the corridor extensively during migration. The riparian habitats of the Wood River and its tributaries provide excellent habitats for a diverse group of animals including beaver, otter, raccoon, mink, muskrat, coyote and fox. Ruffed grouse, woodcock, turkey, cottontail rabbits, squirrels, and white-tailed deer utilize upland areas. Numerous song birds, such as warblers, wrens, thrushes, vireos, swallows and sparrows nest along the river corridor. Birds of prey, including hawks, osprey, and herons feed from the river. Dragonflies, mayflies, freshwater mussels, crayfish and other insects and invertebrates form the basis of the food web. At any time in the summer numerous flowering plants, such as fragrant white water lilies, pickerel weed, cardinal flowers, native rhododendron, and arrowhead, can be seen.

**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 WOOD-PAWCATUCK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IF APPROPRIATE.**



Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association's mission is to promote and protect the integrity of the lands and waters of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. The Watershed encompasses a 300 square mile area of land in southern RI and southeastern CT. [www.wpwa.org](http://www.wpwa.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).

