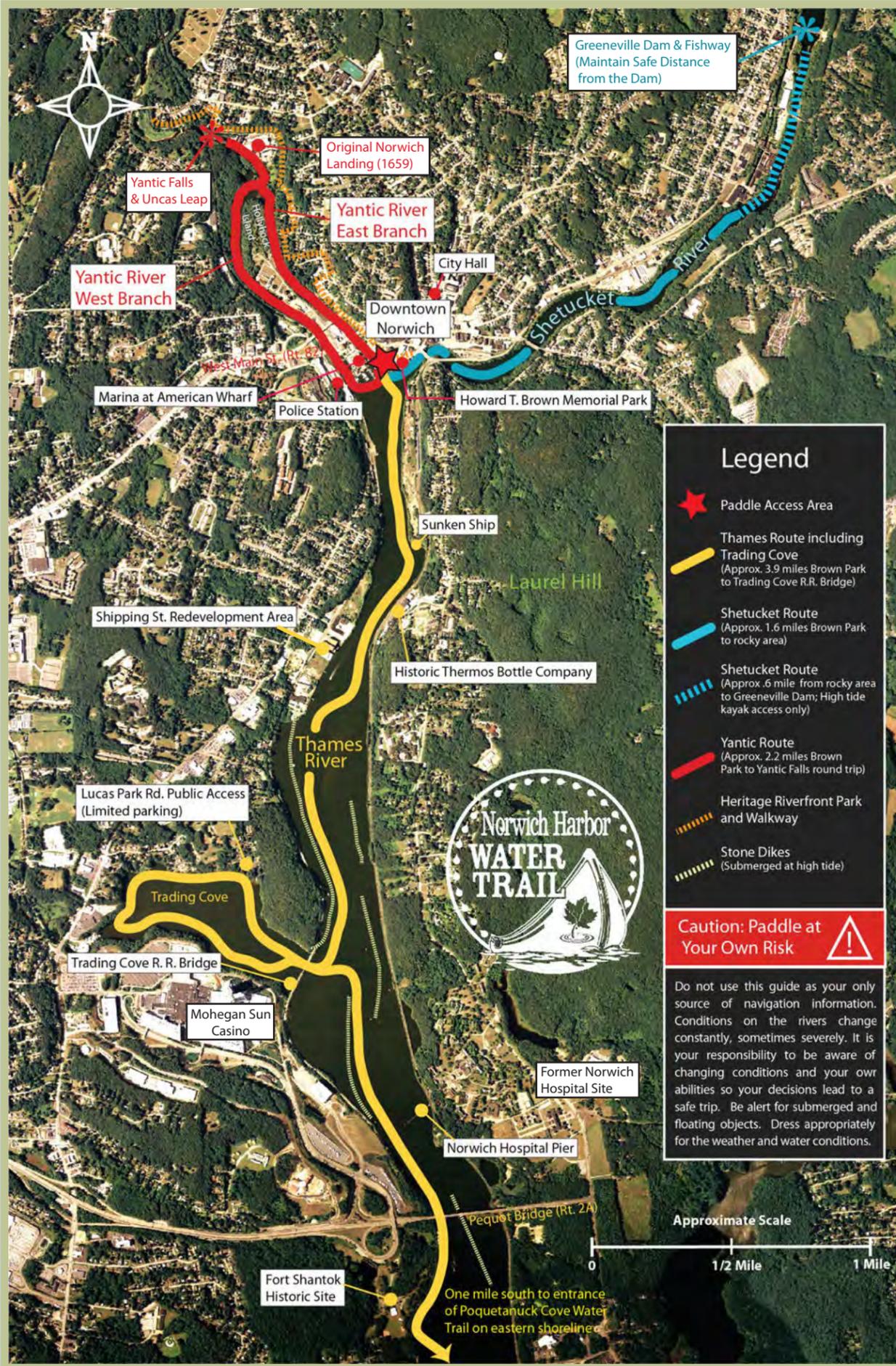


Map for reference only. Not for navigation.

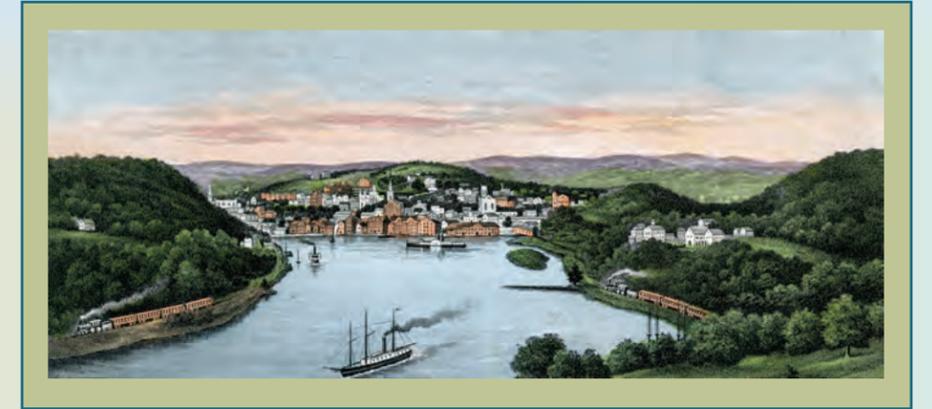


Norwich Harbor Water Trail



Thames River at Norwich (G. Steadman) ★ Paddle Access Area

Welcome to historic Norwich Harbor at the head of the Thames River, where the Yantic and Shetucket rivers converge. In June of 1659, the first settlers of Norwich arrived by sailboat and landed nearby on the Yantic shore. Today, paddlers on the Norwich Harbor Water Trail experience first-hand the rich environment, culture and history of southeast Connecticut.



1859 Historic Harbor View (Judge C. Norris Collection)

Canoe and kayak journeys can begin and end at Howard T. Brown Memorial Park. From the park's public launching ramp on the Downtown waterfront, the unique scenic quality and historic legend of Yantic Falls and Indian Leap are one mile upstream on the Yantic; Greenville Dam is about two and a half miles upstream on the Shetucket; and Trading Cove and the Mohegan Sun Casino are four miles downstream on the Thames. Long Island Sound is 16 miles downstream.

The Thames is the third largest river in Connecticut, behind the Connecticut and Housatonic. An intricate web of tributaries feeds into the Thames from the north, including the Quinebaug, Shetucket and Yantic rivers.

The valleys of the Quinebaug and Shetucket rivers are designated by the U.S. Congress as a National Heritage Corridor known as the Last Green Valley - a place where natural and cultural resources have combined to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape.

Learn More

In the 1700s, Norwich Harbor became a deep-water seaport. Steamboat service to New York began in 1817, and then railroads converged on the city from all directions in the mid-1800s. Norwich waterways also powered great mills and industry.

Learn more about Norwich Harbor and its natural and cultural history from the Norwich Harbor Management Commission's webpage at www.norwichct.org. Learn about the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor and other water trails from The Last Green Valley (www.tlgv.org). Explore the website of the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (www.ct.gov/deep).

Yantic Falls - Uncas Leap. The scenic quality of this cascading waterfall is unparalleled. Above the falls a footbridge over the river provides a scenic vista of the falls and cove below. The falls is also a place of legend where the Narragansett and Mohegan Tribes battled in 1643.



Yantic Falls and Uncas Leap (K. Placko)

Watershed of the Thames

Long Island Sound depends on the environmental quality of its many tributaries and watersheds. If the water flowing into the Sound is polluted, water we swim in and fish we eat will be polluted too. Alone, each source of runoff pollution has only a small impact, but the cumulative impacts of many sources throughout the watershed can be significant. Everyone can help reduce runoff pollution, simply by being aware of how watersheds work. Everyday water-friendly practices, such as proper disposal of pet waste and limited use of fertilizers and pesticides, help keep Norwich Harbor, the Thames River and Long Island Sound clean for people, fish and wildlife.



FISH OF THE HARBOR

Norwich waterways provide exceptional fish habitat. Fresh water from the Shetucket and Yantic rivers flows into Norwich Harbor where it mixes with salt water in the Thames River. This diverse environment supports a variety of fresh water and salt water fish, along with anadromous fish that live most of their lives in the ocean but swim upstream to spawn in fresh water. For centuries, these fish sustained Native Americans who gathered nearby each spring for rich harvests of the seemingly unlimited shad, salmon, eel and other species. Early settlers and colonists also depended on these migratory fish now pursued by recreational anglers.



Shetucket River (G. Steadman)

Dams built across the Shetucket River and its tributaries in the 1800s harnessed waterpower for manufacturing but blocked spawning runs of shad, alewife and other native species. These fish were eliminated from their natural habitat in the entire watershed upstream of the Greenville Dam. To allow fish to swim past the dam, Norwich Public Utilities worked with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to install a fish lift in the dam in 1996. Thousands of shad and many other fish species now pass through the Greenville fish lift each year. Restoring anadromous fish to their natural habitat provides recreational, economic and environmental benefits.



Greenville Dam and Fishway (CT DEEP Fisheries Div.)



American shad
(*Alosa sapidissima*)

Growing up to 2 feet long, this silvery, schooling fish is the Connecticut State Fish in recognition of its value as a colonial food source. Historically, the Shetucket River was one of the more productive shad rivers in New England.



Striped bass
(*Morone saxatilis*)

Norwich Harbor's overwintering population of stripers is remarkable; stripers caught in the harbor likely spawned in the Hudson River.



When paddling, always remain a safe distance from the Greenville Dam.

This guide cannot predict your experience on the water. It provides some basic information and encourages you to ask questions, learn from others, and make careful decisions before you begin your trip.

Fish illustrations by Flickr Ford www.flickrfordart.com



Brown Park on the Downtown Waterfront
(G. Steadman)

Tidal conditions will affect your trip. Mean tidal range at Norwich is about three feet.

Paddle Safe, Paddle Smart

- **PLAN YOUR TRIP** carefully. Additional public access areas are being planned but for now be sure you are capable of the return trip to the main Paddle Access Area at Brown Park.
- **WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET (PFD)** with an attached whistle. State law requires there **MUST** be a wearable PFD aboard for each person and that you **MUST** wear a PFD in a manually propelled vessel from October 1 through May 31.
- Always leave a **FLOAT PLAN** with someone ashore. Be specific about where you plan to go and when you will be back. Be sure to report when you return.
- If you **CAPSIZE**, stay with your vessel.
- **PADDLE NEAR SHORE**, out of the main channel. Be alert for submerged stone dikes.
- In case of emergency, **DIAL 911** and try to pinpoint your location in relation to landmarks.
- Think **SAFETY FIRST**. Consult the Connecticut Boaters Guide (www.ct/deep).

“When in doubt, don’t go out.”

Caution: Paddle at Your Own Risk. Do not use this guide as your only source of information. Conditions on the rivers change constantly, sometimes severely. It is your responsibility to be aware of changing conditions and your own abilities so your decisions lead to a safe trip.



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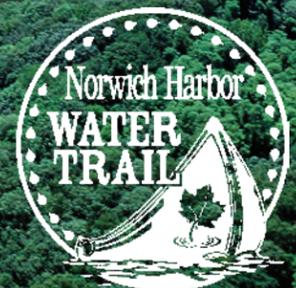
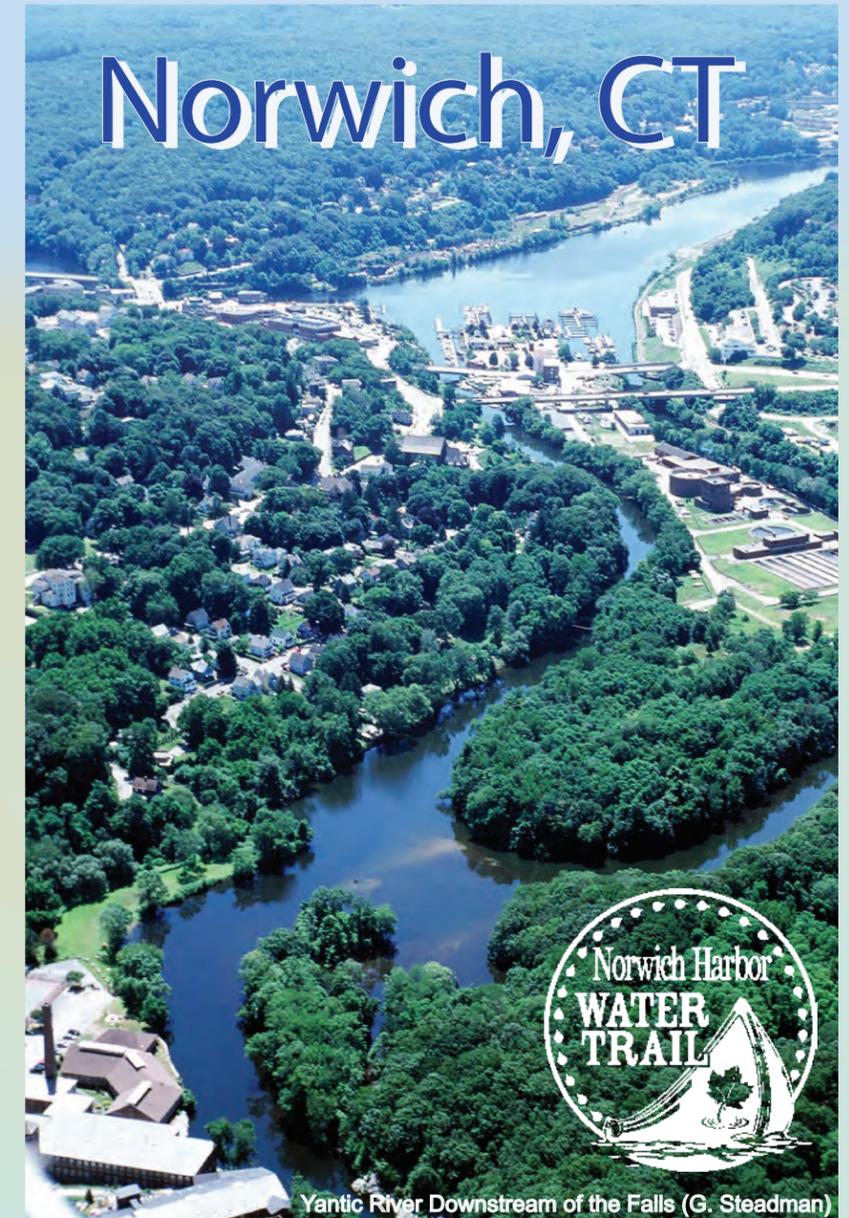
Norwich on the Harbor



Long Island Sound Study
A Partnership to Restore and Protect the Sound

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Norwich, CT



Yantic River Downstream of the Falls (G. Steadman)

NORWICH HARBOR WATER TRAIL ON THE THAMES, YANTIC AND SHETUCKET RIVERS

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