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## Stillwater Pond

**Overview:** The paddle down the Woonasquatucket River to Stillwater Pond and back is not a long trip but it takes you through the remotest section of the Woonasquatucket accessible to canoes and kayaks. Before reaching Stillwater Pond the river cuts through a long north-south ridge, so the middle section of this paddle is between steeply sloping, rocky hills. Unless the water is high, the river is slow and quiet.

The put-in below the dam at Woonasquatucket Reservoir is on rock rip-rap. Be careful! The footing is unstable and the rocks are sharp. For the first  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile the river is narrow and overhung with trees, and then it slowly opens out into Stillwater Pond. At the southern corner of the pond, a mile from the put-in, there is a good place to get out and take a walk along the Stillwater Scenic Trail.

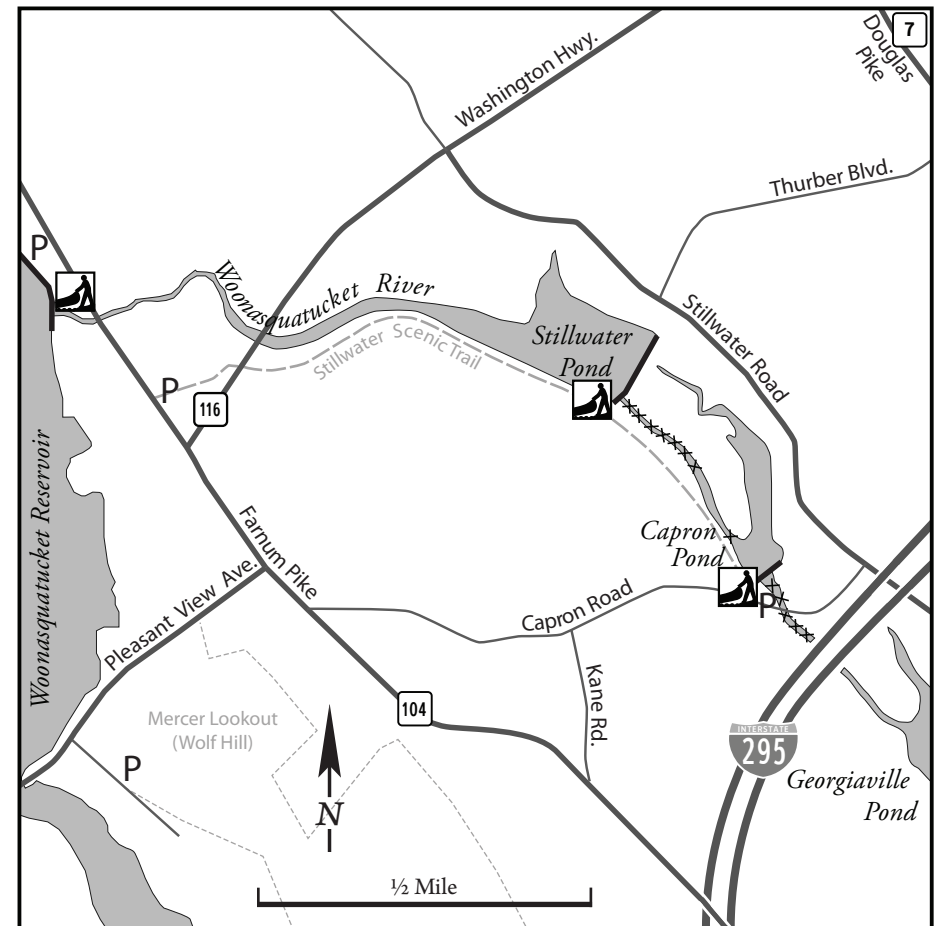
**Getting There:** Take exit 8B off I-295 (north or south) in Smithfield. This will put you on Route 7 (Douglas Pike) heading north. In about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile, at the second light, turn left onto Washington Highway (Route 116). Go 1 mile to a T-junction. Turn right here onto Farnum Pike (Route 104), go  $\frac{1}{3}$  mile and look for a DEM fishing access parking lot on the left. To get to Stillwater Pond put in below the dam.

**What's There:** The paddle to Stillwater Pond starts below the dam at Woonasquatucket Reservoir. From the parking lot for the DEM fishing access site off Farnum Pike follow the concrete path down to the base of the dam and put in from the rock rip-rap there. After passing under Farnum Pike the river is narrow and overhung with trees. If the water levels are low, some areas here will be rocky. If it is unusually high there can be enough current to make the paddling more challenging. In  $\frac{1}{3}$  mile you will pass under the high arch of the Stillwater Viaduct, built by the WPA during the Great Depression. Here the river slowly starts to open out until you reach Stillwater Pond,  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the put-in. Since it is small and has no major roads near it, Stillwater Pond is generally peaceful and calm.

Paddle to the southern corner of the pond and you will find a good place to take out just a little before the dam. The Stillwater Scenic Trail runs close the shore here. Heading southeast along the trail takes you through the woods near the spillway that drains Stillwater Pond (except when water levels are very low when all the water leaves the pond via the other channel). Look for side trails heading down towards the river and follow these to get a closer look at the pretty but rocky and turbulent river. Watch out for poison ivy.

The dam that creates Stillwater Pond has a vertical face on the down river side so the northeastern arm of Capron Pond is not accessible from Stillwater Pond.

Once you have explored Stillwater Pond, turn around and paddle back up to the put-in. For the last  $\frac{1}{3}$  mile, from Stillwater Viaduct to the put-in, you will be paddling against some current but usually not a lot. However, if the river is high



there can be too much current to paddle against. In that case take out at the south end of the viaduct, walk under it up to the Stillwater Trail, turn right and follow the trail back to Farnum Pike. Turn right and go  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile up the pike to the put-in.

**Also in the Area:** A put-in off Capron Road that provides access to Capron Pond, which is even smaller than Stillwater. The marshes that border it make it a good place for birds.

Paddling the river from Capron Pond to Georgiaville Pond is not recommended because of the short, steep drop in the river as it enters the tunnels under I-295 and the potential for “strainers” under I-295 and Capron Road.

The mile-long Stillwater Scenic Trail parallels this paddle, running on the route of the former Providence & Springfield Railroad, which ran beside the river. There are small parking areas at both ends of the trail, but the end at Farnum Pike is the recommended starting point since the parking area there is larger and easier to find. The trail is broad and level so the walking is easy. The scenery is pretty, with views of the river, Stillwater Pond and Capron Pond.