

## Canoeing on the Connecticut River



New England Power  
A NEES company

*The Connecticut River is a national treasure that spans 410 miles – from high in the mountains of northern New Hampshire near the Canadian border south into Long Island Sound. Along the way it drains 11,260 square miles of land. The Connecticut River is not only picturesque, it also provides abundant recreational opportunities, especially for canoeing. Except for a few dams and rapids, most of the upper Connecticut – from northern New Hampshire to western Massachusetts – can be traveled by either canoe, kayak, or small powerboat.*

*Our careful management of the six hydroelectric generating plants we own and operate along the upper Connecticut proves that power plants, recreation areas, and wildlife can successfully exist together. We take scrupulous care to preserve the rugged character of the land along the river, while offering access to parking areas, picnic sites, and boat launches to the public without charge.*

*Canoeing on the Connecticut River provides information on launch sites, portages, recreation areas, campsites and much more. Easy to read maps make locating points of interest a simple task. This guide is intended to be used as a reference for those new to the Connecticut River. Please remember that conditions change on the river very frequently and no guide can be relied on to be completely accurate.*

## Before you begin your canoe trip ...

Never camp or build a fire on private land without first asking permission of the landowner. The motto, "leave only footprints and take only photos" should be the rule for all those who canoe the river.

***It is important that those canoeing on the river scout sections that can be hazardous at certain times of the year. When in doubt, portage around the obstacle. Safety should always be paramount. Flows are generally regulated and fluctuate seasonally, daily, and at times, hourly.***

The law requires that each vessel carry a Coast Guard approved type I, II, or III personal flotation device (pfd) for every person on board. It is advisable that the pfd be worn when canoeing.

It is a good idea to call New England Power's new toll-free river line before you begin your canoe trip. The number is **1-888-FLOWONE** or 1-888-356-3663.

It is also recommended that you not canoe alone and that a float plan be left with a responsible person. A float plan lets others know where and when you put in, your intended stops, and the place and time you intend to take out.

- Map Key**
  - ▲ Public campground
  - Boat access/ramp
  - City/town
  - ::: Portage
  - Bridge
  - ▲ Canoe campsite
  - Dam
  - ~~~~ Rapids
  - New England Power (NEP) facility

## About the River

The Connecticut River, at 410 miles long, is the longest river in New England. It begins high in the mountains of northern New Hampshire near the Canadian border and winds its way south to Long Island Sound. Along the way it drains 11,260 square miles of land.

The Connecticut has a rich history as a route of exploration and later of settlement in the days when wilderness surrounded the river and the only feasible way to travel and transport goods was by water. Still later its water and that of its tributaries helped fuel the Industrial Revolution.

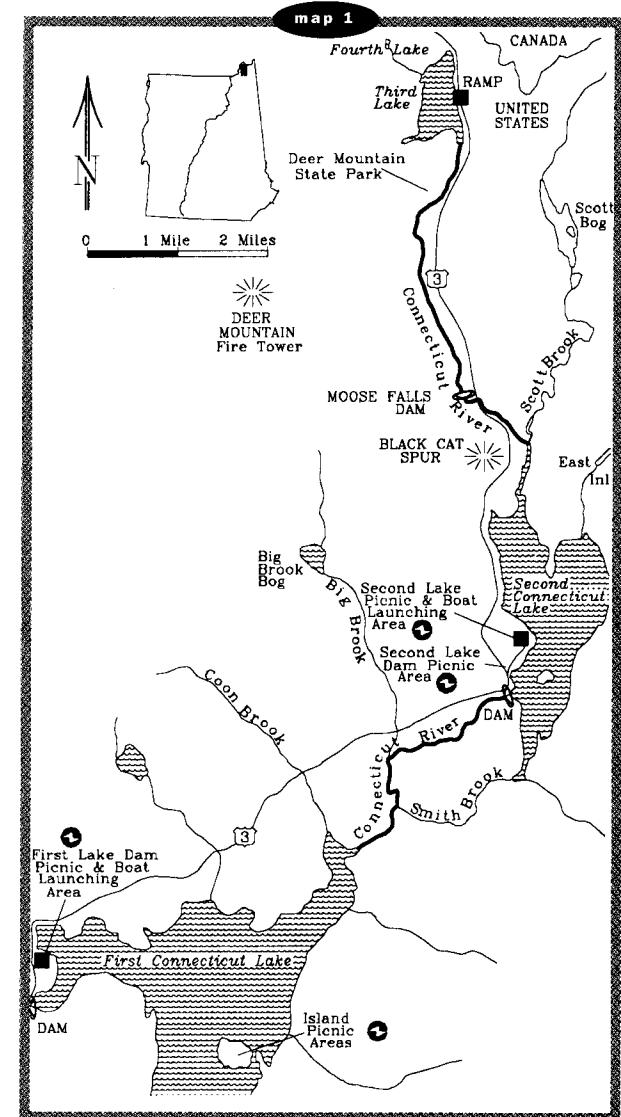
The Connecticut River is a natural treasure that provides both recreation and energy. There are currently 17 dams on the river and the remains of three others that have been breached. New England Power Company owns eight of those between the source and the Massachusetts border which is the area covered by this guide.

## How to get there

### maps 1 & 2

To get to the source at Fourth Connecticut Lake you must hike along the U.S./Canadian border. Drive to the U.S. Customs station on Route 3 north of Pittsburg, N.H. and park across the road. The trail begins on the side of the road occupied by Customs and climbs rather quickly up over the brush-covered ledges.

As you follow the winding border look for three-inch diameter brass tablets in the center of the



cleared area. They are border markers and one is located at every turn. Some are hard to find because of the growth. You will be looking for marker 484-15 which is located about three quarters of a mile up the trail. There should also be a sign tacked on a tree that indicates the trail to Fourth Connecticut Lake. The trail, which heads left or south as you reach the marker, leads about a half mile down to the source of the Connecticut.

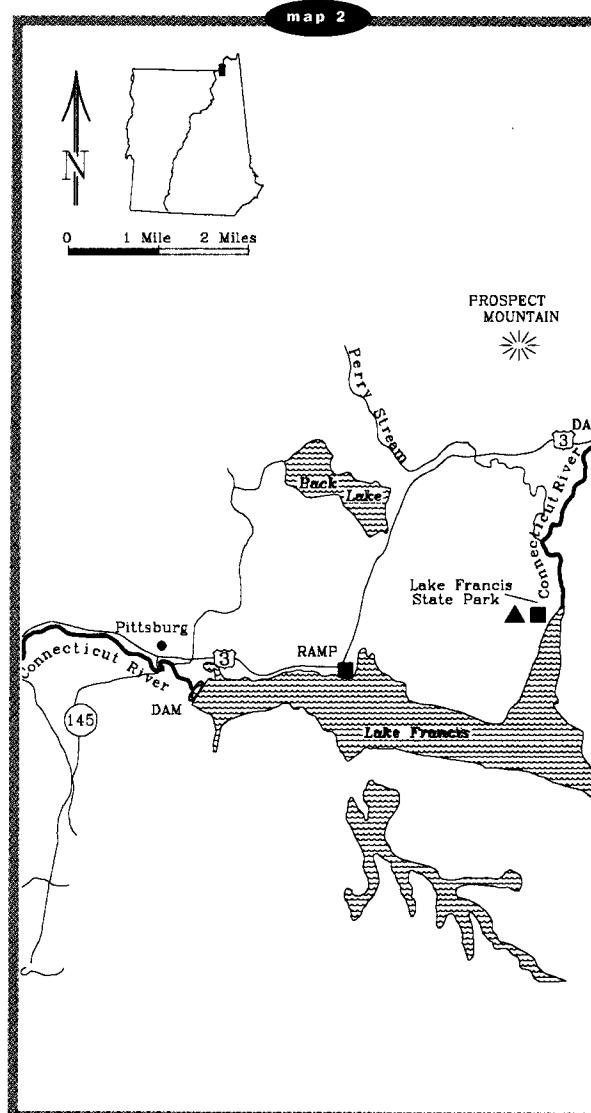
The Fourth Connecticut Lake is by no means a lake. It is not much bigger than a beaver pond and a surrounding bog located in a natural bowl. The outlet is reached by hiking around the east side of the pond. There you can easily step across the river, as it is but a small brook when it begins its long journey to the sea.

It is interesting to note that the elevation of the Fourth Lake is 2,600 feet and that the elevation of Lake Francis, which is also in the town of Pittsburg, is 1,380 feet. The drop in elevation is 1,220 feet. The Connecticut takes another 380 miles to reach the sea and drop a similar distance.

The river is generally not suitable for canoeing in the town of Pittsburg, but the four lakes, Third, Second, First and Francis provide enjoyable flatwater canoeing and excellent fishing and nature watching. Each has public access and there are several campgrounds in the area offering places to camp.

#### map 3

Most downriver canoeing begins in Canaan, Vt. just below the Route 114 Bridge.



Supplies can be purchased close to the river in either Canaan or West Stewartstown, N.H.

There are a few riffles below the bridge and then the river meanders for several miles with many nice sandbars that make excellent places to stop and picnic or to swim.

The distance from Canaan to the Colebrook/Lemington Bridge is about 13 miles.

Looking to the right you will see Mt. Monadnock which rises 3,140 feet above the valley on the Vermont side. A 2.4 mile trail leads to Mt. Monadnock from Route 102 just above the bridge. The summit provides excellent views of the valley and the Presidents to the southeast.

A short walk from the bridge will bring you to Colebrook, N.H. and all the services that a medium-sized town can provide.

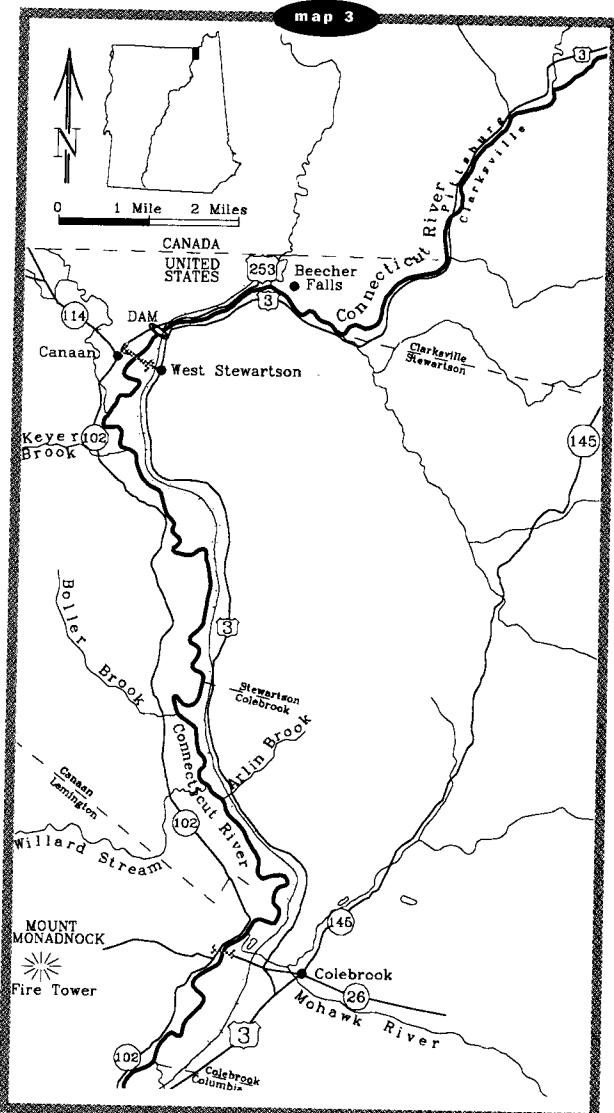
It is five miles downstream from the Colebrook Bridge to the covered bridge connecting Columbia and Lemington. The river alternates between smooth water and easy rapids.

#### map 4

The river splits behind an island a half mile above the Columbia Bridge. A paddle to the left side will provide solitude, but watch for low hanging branches.

Below the covered bridge is about two miles of flat water, followed by nine miles of intermittent rapids. Care should be taken in this section to watch for boulders and for the remains of old timber cribs.

***Eight miles below the Columbia bridge there is a dangerous section containing the***



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***breached remains of an old dam that requires caution.***

Lyman Falls is very hard to see from a canoe and problems can arise. The most obvious sign of the old dam is a block of concrete approximately four feet high and eight feet wide near the Vermont shore.

***Upon spying the concrete, pull ashore and scout ahead.***

The dam, once a combination of timber crib and concrete, is nearly all gone. At times canoes can run the river on the New Hampshire side, but low water may prevent such navigation. Just below the surface are the remains of the dam and many large spikes and pieces of reinforcing steel that can tear holes in a canoe.

Lyman Falls Dam is three miles from the Route 105 bridge connecting Bloomfield, Vt. and North Stratford, N.H. The river is strewn with large boulders and care should be taken.

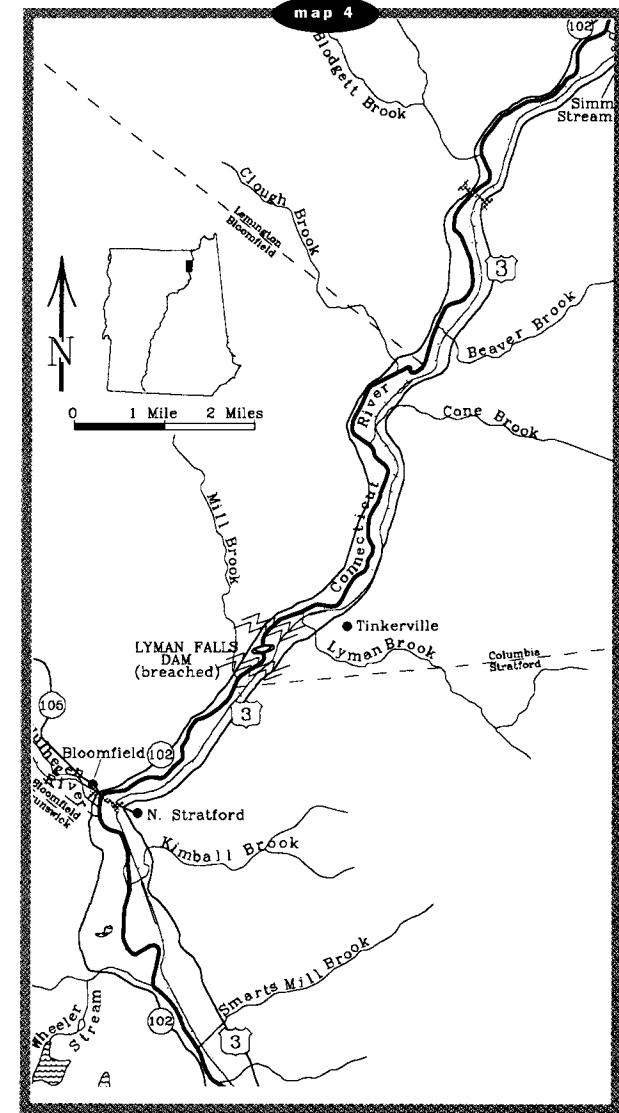
Fishing is restricted to catch and release by flies or artificial lures with barbless hooks from a point 250 feet below the Lyman Dam to a point 1600 feet upstream of the Bloomfield/North Stratford bridge.

Food and supplies can be purchased on either side of the bridge. This is a good place to put in or take out canoes.

The Nulhegan River enters the Connecticut on the Vermont side just below the bridge.

About a mile downstream is a bit of fast water called the "Horse Race." High on the bank on the Vermont side are the remains of the Brunswick Mineral Springs.

8



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#### map 5

Six miles downstream of the Bloomfield/North Stratford Bridge the Paul Stream, which drains Ferdinand Bog and Maidstone Lake, enters on the Vermont side. Maidstone State Park is located a few miles up a winding dirt road.

Canoe another six miles and you pass under the old truss bridge that connects Maidstone, Vt. and Stratford, N.H. The bridge is privately owned and is currently closed to traffic.

The Connecticut continues its meandering course south to the Guildhall/Northumberland Bridge, a distance of 20 miles from Bloomfield. About three miles above the bridge, the Upper Ammonoosuc enters from New Hampshire. Long before you reach the tributary you will see the stacks of the paper mills located in Groveton, N.H.

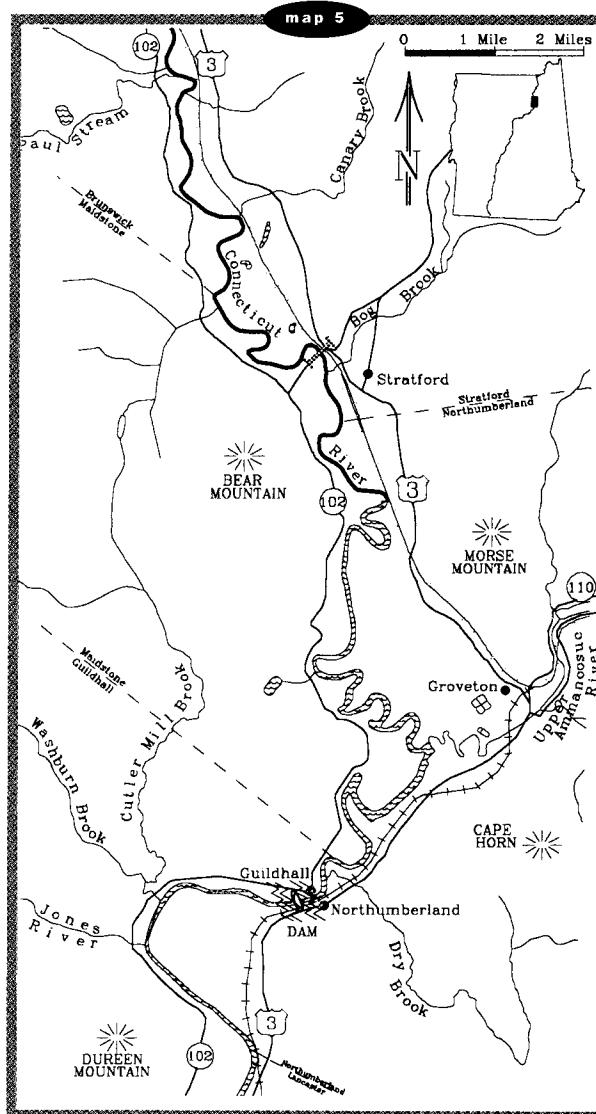
Supplies can be obtained with a short walk to the shopping center located on the Northumberland, N.H. side of the bridge.

The breached Northumberland or Wyoming Dam is located just below the bridge. ***Do not try to run this section.*** Portage on the Vermont side. There is a nice sandy beach below the dam that provides a good spot to put in.

You are now 320 river miles from Long Island Sound and 90 miles from Fourth Connecticut Lake.

The river winds its way through agricultural lands and cattle frequently come to the water to investigate. Do not leave canoes right side up or you may return to find a large cow standing in your canoe.

Good views of the Presidentialts are afforded from



this section of the river. Look for Mount Washington and the black smoke spiraling upward from the Cog Railway.

#### map 6

Six miles below the put in at Guildhall, Vt. the scenic South Lancaster covered bridge spans the river. Get your camera ready.

After another three miles a railroad bridge crosses the river and a large brook enters on the New Hampshire side.

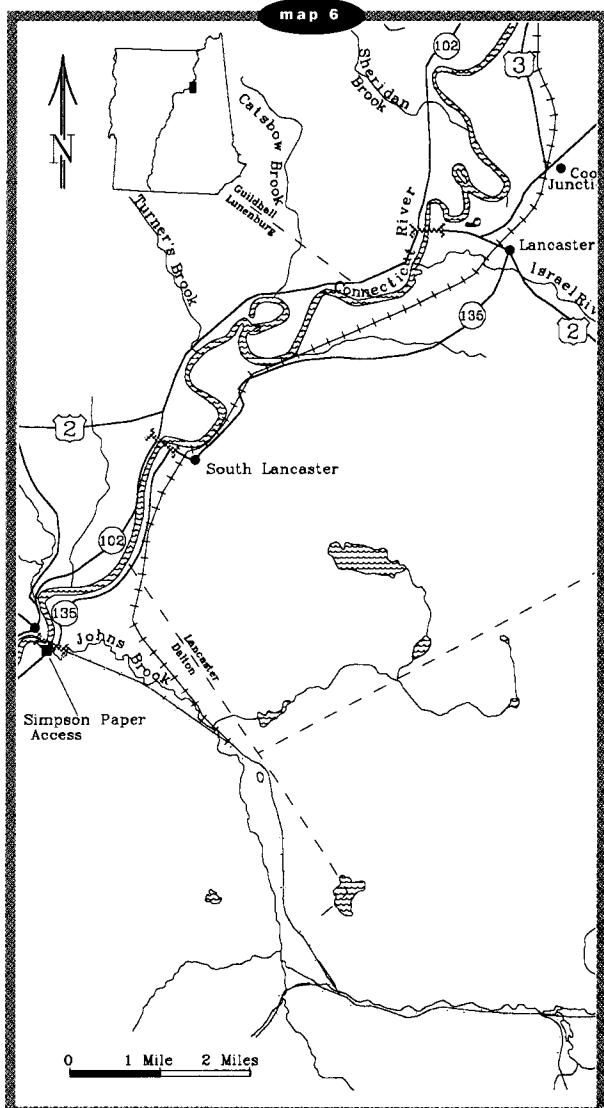
Simpson Paper Company, the owner of the dam and paper mill in Gilman, Vt., has built a public car-top boat access in Dalton, up river from the dam. The access has a cement pad and a gravel parking area. It is located just below the railroad bridge that crosses the Connecticut and is within sight of the junction of Routes 142 and 135.

#### map 7

It is all flat water to the Gilman Dam and Simpson Paper Mill. Portage the dam on the New Hampshire side.

A few yards below the dam a sloping bridge crosses from Dalton, N.H. to Gilman, Vt. A short walk from the New Hampshire end of the bridge will take you to a store for supplies.

The next 12 miles of canoeing are done on Moore Reservoir, a beautiful impoundment that is frequented by osprey and bald eagles. Keep your eyes peeled and watch for solitary trees or extended branches along the shore that are used as perches.



map 6

*As you enter the broad section of the reservoir be on the lookout for water skiers and powerboats. This is a favorite spot for recreational boating and caution is urged, especially during low light conditions.*

As you are canoeing on a large lake, winds can be a problem. At times, strenuous paddling is required to make headway downstream.

Early in the day is the best time to paddle on open water.

Moore Reservoir has nice sandy beaches and secluded coves that make good places to stop for lunch, take a swim, or simply rest.

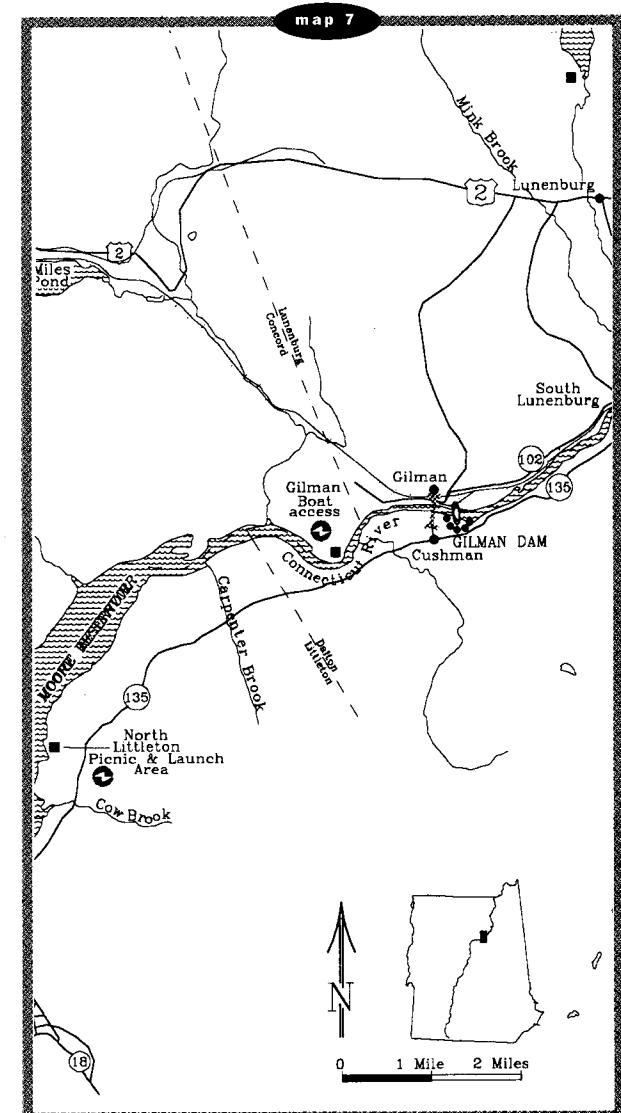
The 3,490-acre storage reservoir created by the dam is one of the larger bodies of water in the north country. Kept largely undeveloped through riparian ownership by New England Power, the Moore reservoir is a mecca for those wanting to avoid crowds and enjoy the solitude often found only on remote lakes.

No camping is allowed on the reservoir.

**map 8**

New England Power maintains five boat accesses and several picnic areas along the lower portion of the reservoir. Tables, charcoal grills, and toilets are available.

A visitor center is located on the New Hampshire side of the dam and is open from Memorial Day weekend to Columbus Day weekend. It is a good place to stop and learn about the river and its importance as a hydroelectric resource.



map 7

**Follow the signs to portage Moore Dam on the Vermont side. Some fast water will be encountered between the dam and the visible I-93 bridges, especially when the facility is generating. Flows below Moore Dam fluctuate often. Remain constantly aware of changing flow conditions.**

Moore Station is the newest of the three hydro facilities making up the Fifteen Mile Falls Development. It opened in 1957 and was named after Samuel C. Moore, a former president of New England Power.

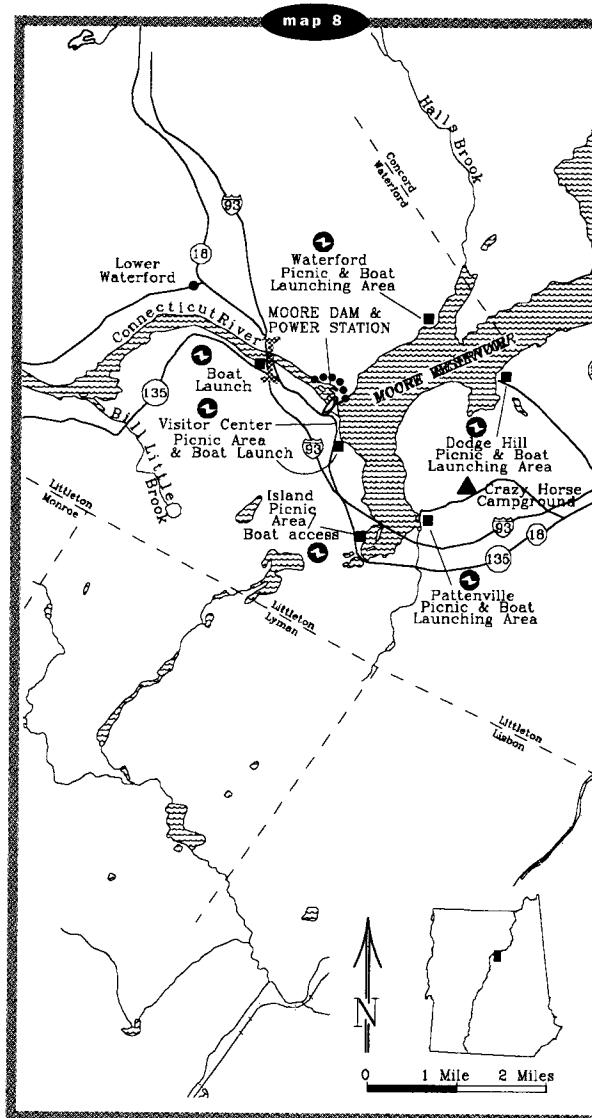
Spanning the Connecticut River between Littleton, N.H. and Waterford, Vt., Moore Station is New England's largest conventional hydroelectric station with a generating capacity of 192 megawatts.

The reservoir created by Comerford Dam backs up to within sight of Moore Dam. The public boat access is under the Route 18 bridge on the New Hampshire side.

#### map 9

**The eight mile long Comerford Reservoir is excellent fishing for both trout and bass. Use caution when canoeing as high winds and power boats sometimes present hazards.**

Comerford Station began operating in 1930 and has a capacity of 164 megawatts. Originally known as the Fifteen-Mile-Falls plant, the station later was renamed in honor of Frank D. Comerford, former president of New England Power Association, the predecessor of New England Electric System.



New England Power provides a second boat access and a picnic area on the Vermont side, north of the dam.

The portage of the dam is on the New Hampshire side where there is also a picnic area which includes a sandy beach.

This portage requires a long, steep haul down a grassy slope and then a carry to the put in below the dam.

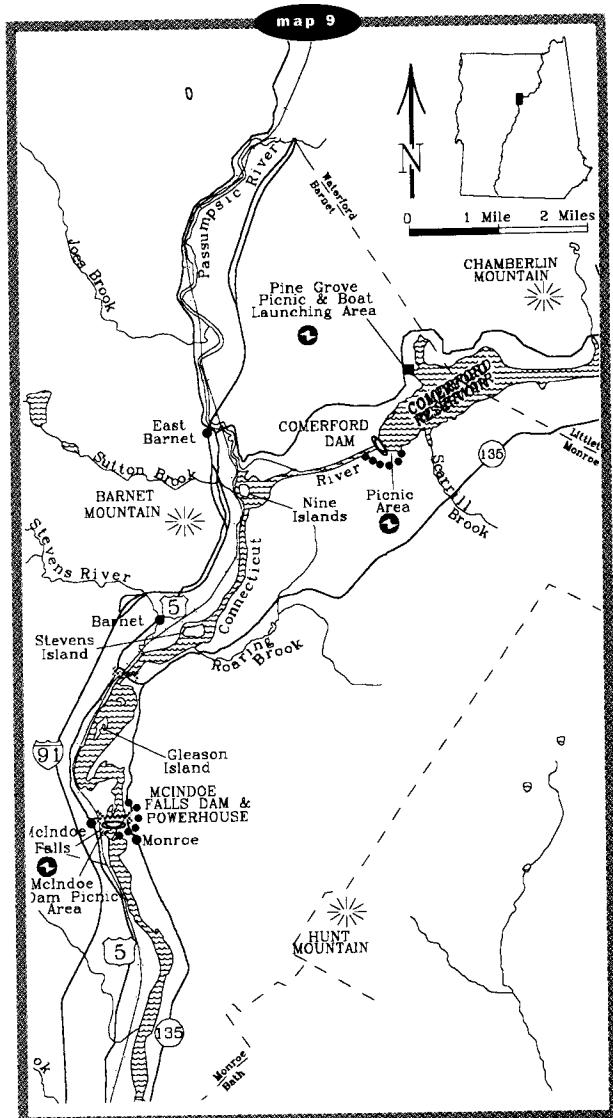
**Use caution when putting in as the current may be very fast if the station is generating at full capacity. Never camp or leave canoes unattended in the section between Comerford and McIndoes. Water levels often rise very rapidly as the generators come on line. Remain alert for changing flows.**

**Care should be exercised in the first two miles as there are several large boulders in the river that can cause problems.**

About two miles below the dam, the Passumpsic River enters on the Vermont side and in another two miles the Stevens Branch also enters from Vermont.

The Barnet/North Monroe bridge soon appears and the river widens and grows shallow as it becomes McIndoes Reservoir. There is a large island just below the bridge and after the island the river again narrows and makes a sharp left turn. Bald eagles are often seen in this area.

It is then a short paddle to the McIndoes Falls/Monroe bridge and the McIndoes Dam. Picnic facilities are maintained below the dam on the



map 9

Vermont side by New England Power and supplies may be purchased after a short walk on either side of the bridge.

Portage on the New Hampshire side. Signs indicate the portage route.

McIndoes Station is the smallest of the three facilities that make up the Fifteen Mile Falls Development and the one farthest down river. It was built in 1931 and serves to smooth out the river flows resulting from the discharges from Comerford and Moore Stations.

Taken together, the dams making up the Fifteen Mile Falls Development are an important contributor to the flood control plan for the Connecticut River Valley. During the spring and other times of high

runoff, water is held to prevent flooding down river and then released when the danger is lessened, or during the drier months of the year.

#### Bald Eagles

Bald eagles are regularly seen perched along the Connecticut. The symbol of our nation was once nearly extinct in the Northeast but has made a comeback since the elimination of DDT. The status of the bald eagle was recently upgraded from endangered to threatened.

#### map 10

It is about two and a half miles to the next portage at the Ryegate dam located at the area known as Dodge Falls. The paddling is easy and the river is generally smooth. Between McIndoes and Dodge Falls three islands are encountered.

Look for the stack of the papermill located on the Vermont side of the dam. Once you pass the wood-chip power plant located high on the Vermont bank, you are close to the dam.

The portage is on the New Hampshire side as is a primitive canoe campsite established by Dodge Falls Hydro as part of the Upper Valley Land Trust's primitive campsites program. The site has two shelters and a chemical toilet.

*Below Dodge Falls the river is flat and easily paddled. Above Woodsville, N.H. the river takes a sharp left turn and then narrows and makes a sharp right turn passing between ledges. Use extreme caution during times of high water, as many canoes have capsized or taken on water at this point.*

The next mile provides a pleasant paddle through riffles and easy rapids. The Ammonoosuc River enters on the New Hampshire side and the railroad bridge and the Route 302 bridge connecting Woodsville, N.H. and Wells River, Vt. are visible.

Food and services are available on either side of the bridge.

The Wells River enters below the bridge on the Vermont side and the water becomes very shallow. At times of low water, canoes may touch bottom in this stretch.

The river begins to wind and passes a large wooded island. Farmland surrounds the river as you canoe south. On the hill overlooking the river in New Hampshire is the large Grafton County Complex.

### map 11

As the river draws close to Route 5 on the Vermont side, the most famous scene on the river comes into view. The former Placey farm with the White Mountains in the background has graced countless calendars and been featured in many publications. This point is known to locals as Cow Meadow Flat and is the head of the Wilder reservoir, the point to which water is backed up behind Wilder Dam, located about 46 miles south.

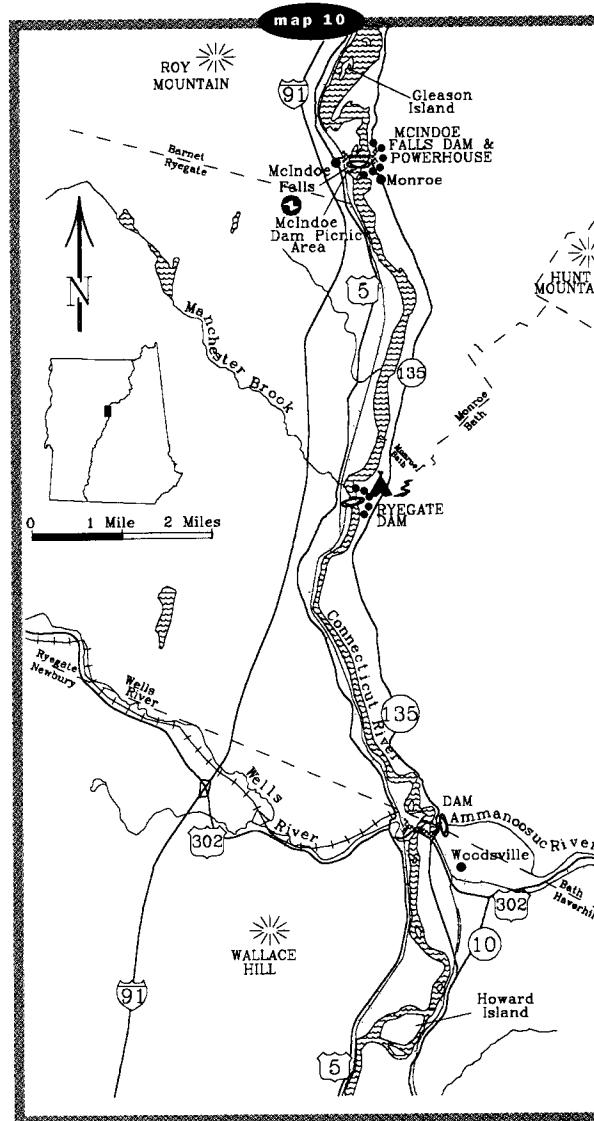
Below North Haverhill, N.H., look for the Haverhill Canoe Campsite. After the river turns from north to southeast below Horse Meadow, there is a small island. The campsite is behind the island, high on the New Hampshire bank.

Downstream is the Newbury/Haverhill bridge and a Fish and Wildlife Department access ramp and parking on the Vermont side.

The river winds lazily for several miles between hay and corn fields. At times paddling can be difficult, if there is a headwind. Bridge abutments and a pier in the river will appear where the Bedell covered bridge once stood. There is a state park on the New Hampshire side which will soon include a boat access.

About a mile downstream on the Vermont side is the Vaughan Meadows Canoe Campsite, situated among a grove of trees.

The river continues its winding course and soon evidence of its power becomes apparent. Spring flooding in the 1950s caused the river to change course, cutting across one of the many oxbows and



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leaving a section of Bradford, Vt. land an island. Over the years the island has become attached to New Hampshire on the upstream side by a long sand bar that now supports considerable vegetation including trees. This may be the only place south of Beecher Falls where one can walk on dry land from New Hampshire to Vermont.

Just below this section is a beautiful sand beach on the New Hampshire side.

A few hundred yards downstream, the river narrows a bit and ledges are exposed in the center.

You are about a mile from the mouth of the Waits River. Paddle up the river and under a railroad bridge to the boat launch and Bugbee Landing Campsite. From this point you can see the commercial district of Bradford, Vt. across the golf course.

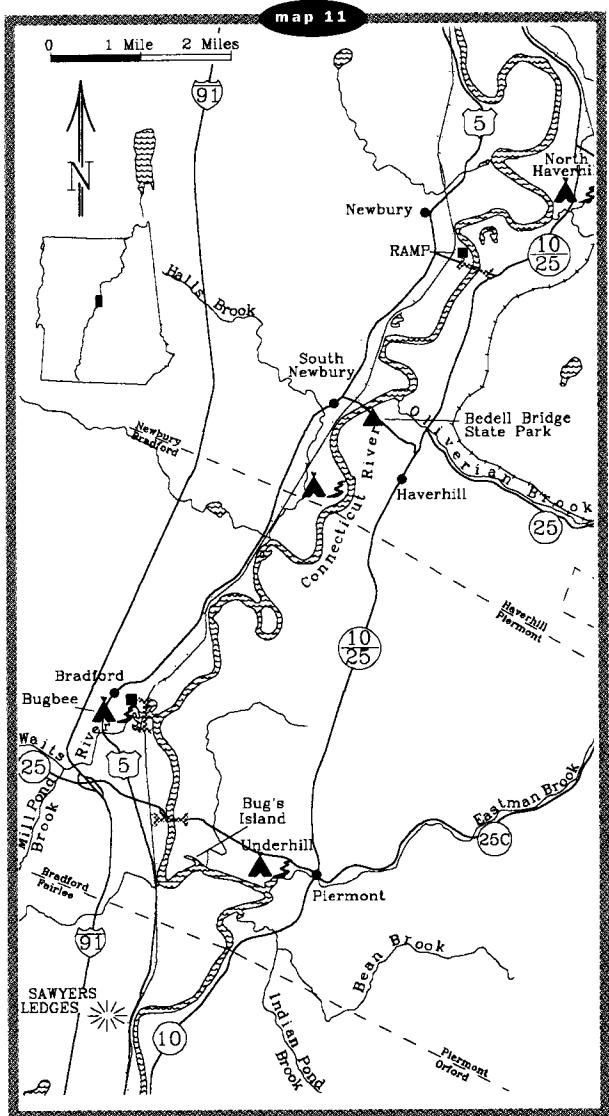
Downstream, about a mile from the Waits River confluence, is the Route 25 bridge connecting Bradford, Vt. and Piermont, N.H. Bugbee Island is just around the corner.

The Underhill Canoe Campsite is located on the New Hampshire shore on a point of land immediately above Eastman Brook. The village of Piermont is visible high above.

### map 12

The river winds close to the cliffs in Vermont known as Sawyers Ledges. Here the railroad and Route 5 are just up the steep bank. Farther south, Orford, N.H. and Fairlee, Vt. come into view. The Palisades behind Fairlee are the home to nesting peregrine falcons.

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**map 11**

The arched Fairlee/Orford Bridge is a good place to stop for supplies. There are stores on both sides of the river.

The distance from the Waits River to this point is 10 miles.

Just below the bridge on the New Hampshire side is a dock and a boat access.

Two miles downstream on the Vermont side is Birch Meadow Campsite, just above the marshland at the outlet of Lake Morey.

It is nine and a half miles between Fairlee and East Thetford, Vt. About halfway, Clay Brook enters from New Hampshire. A short paddle upstream brings you to a covered bridge and eventually to a good birding area.

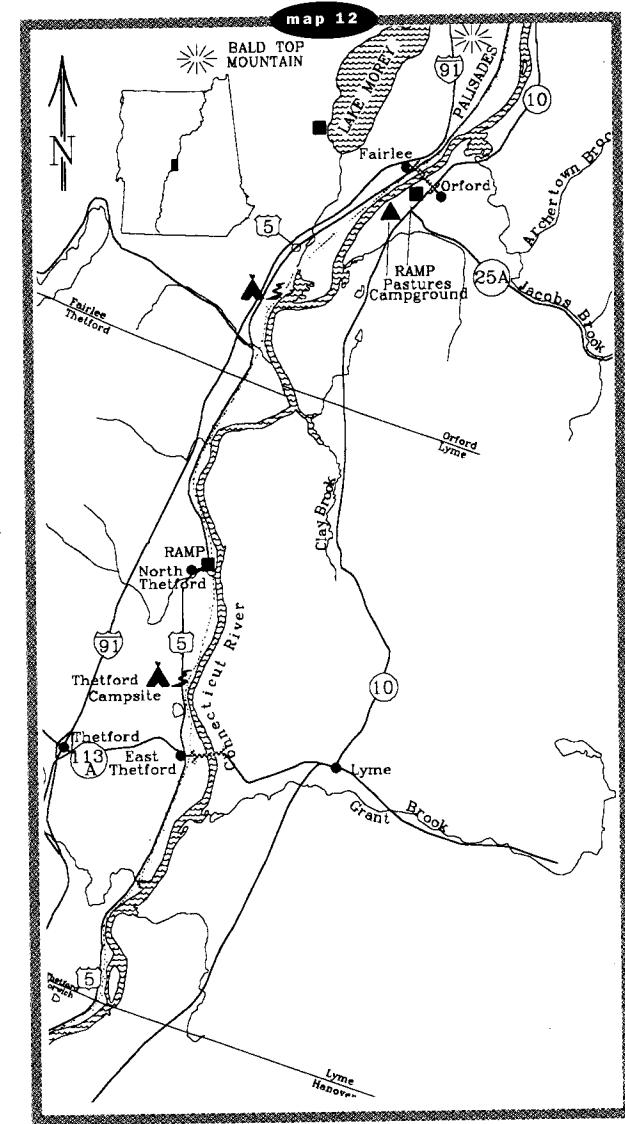
The abutments of an old bridge indicate that you have reached North Thetford, Vt. and are approaching the Fish and Wildlife Dept. boat access on the Vermont side.

About a mile downstream there is a straight stretch of wooded shore with the Thetford Canoe Campsite located on the Vermont side about midway along the wooded stretch. It is about 200 yards beyond a white frame house on the opposite bank.

**map 13**

Five miles below North Thetford, the Ompompanoosuc River enters from Vermont. Turn up the Ompompanoosuc, pass under the railroad and Route 5 bridges, and you will find another Fish and Wildlife Dept. boat access.

A mile down the Connecticut on the east side is



the Hanover, N.H. town boat access and dock known as Wilson Landing.

As the river narrows and turns west into an S curve there is a piney point on the west shore just below a buoy marking a submerged stump. It is here that the Loveland Point Canoe Campsite is located.

A short paddle downstream is the Ledyard Bridge connecting Norwich, Vt. and Hanover, N.H. Just above the bridge is Dartmouth College's Ledyard Canoe Club. This section of river gets a lot of use and you can expect to encounter all types of vessels from power boats to rowing shells.

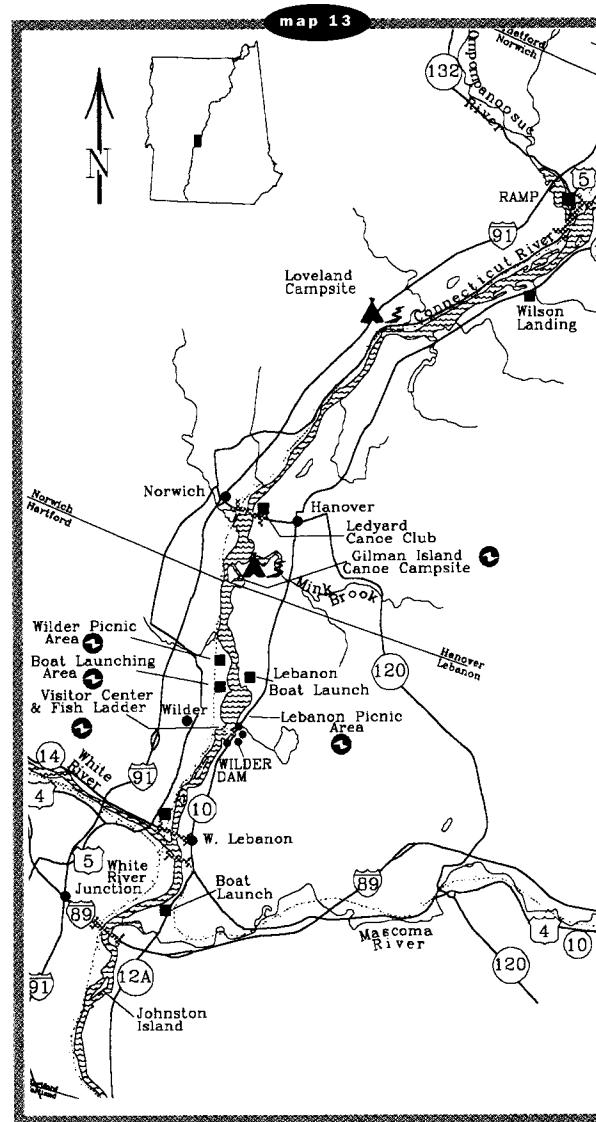
Walk up the hill to Hanover and Dartmouth College. You may see backpackers on the hill or crossing the bridge, as it is here that the Appalachian Trail crosses the river on its way northeast to Maine and Mount Katahdin.

On the Vermont side is the Montshire Museum and its network of nature trails. The museum is worth visiting and is a good place to have a picnic. Just below the Ledyard Bridge, go under the railroad bridge to reach the Montshire.

About a mile below Ledyard Bridge is Gilman Island, which is owned by New England Power. On the south end of the island is a canoe campsite also maintained by this company.

A bit farther down stream on the Vermont side is a picnic area and dock followed by a boat launch also maintained by New England Power. From there, Wilder Dam is about a half mile downstream.

Wilder Station was developed in 1950 and is located at a narrows in a section of the river that had long



provided water power for area industry.

A visitor center is located on the Vermont side and offers a good chance to learn about the history of the area, hydro power and New England Power's efforts to restore Atlantic salmon to the Connecticut and its tributaries. There is a fish ladder located at the dam that may offer visitors a chance to see fish ascending the dam at certain times of the year.

To reach the visitor center, exit the river at the boat launch on the Vermont side and walk along the shore.

Wilder Dam is 212 miles from the mouth of the Connecticut and 156 miles from the Canaan/West Stewartstown bridge.

The portage around the dam is on the New Hampshire side.

***Use caution when putting in below Wilder Dam as the water level may rise rapidly when the generators come on line. The water is swift below the dam.*** Within a mile is the Route 4 bridge connecting White River Jct., Vt. with West Lebanon, N.H. An assortment of stores and services are available on both sides.

Just below the bridge the White River enters from Vermont and below that the I-89 bridges cross high above the river. A short way downstream on the New Hampshire side the Mascoma River enters.

There is a carry in boat access just upstream on the White River behind a small shopping center. On the New Hampshire side there is another boat access just above the mouth of the Mascoma River.

***The water in this section is fast and there***

**are short sections of rapids and strong currents all the way to the mouth of the Ottauquechee River five miles downstream from the White River. Caution must be exercised as conditions change rapidly in this section depending on water levels.**

**map 14**

Johnston Island is below the Mascoma River and three miles downstream is Burnap's Island just above the mouth of the Ottauquechee River. A campsite located on the west side of the island is owned by the town of Plainfield.

Below the Ottauquechee there are huge boulders in the river known as the "Chicken and Hens". Downstream of the boulders the river tends to get very shallow.

**You are now approaching Sumner Falls or Hartland Rapids. Use extreme caution and obey the warning signs posted by New England Power. This is a very dangerous section due to strong currents and the length of the falls. There have been drownings and numerous accidents here.**

**Log Drives**

Adjacent to the portage trail at Sumner Falls is the grave of a young man who lost his life long ago during a log drive. The practice of floating, or driving, millions of feet of logs down the Connecticut each spring cost many men their lives. At times, miles of the river would be choked with logs on the way to Massachusetts sawmills.

The portage is a well marked trail on the Vermont side. New England Power maintains the area and provides picnic tables and toilet facilities for day use.

Three miles below Sumner Falls is Hart Island. Stay to the right to find a scenic spot for a rest or lunch. A mile farther is the Burnham Meadow Canoe Campsite on the Vermont shore.

This section of river offers fine views of the 3,150 foot Mount Ascutney, which dominates the valley on the Vermont side of the river.

From here to Bellows Falls the river slowly winds through the valley and the water is flat.

The famed Windsor/Cornish covered bridge, the longest covered bridge in the United States, with Mount Ascutney in the background, is a must for photographers.

There is a canoe access on the New Hampshire side a quarter mile above the covered bridge.

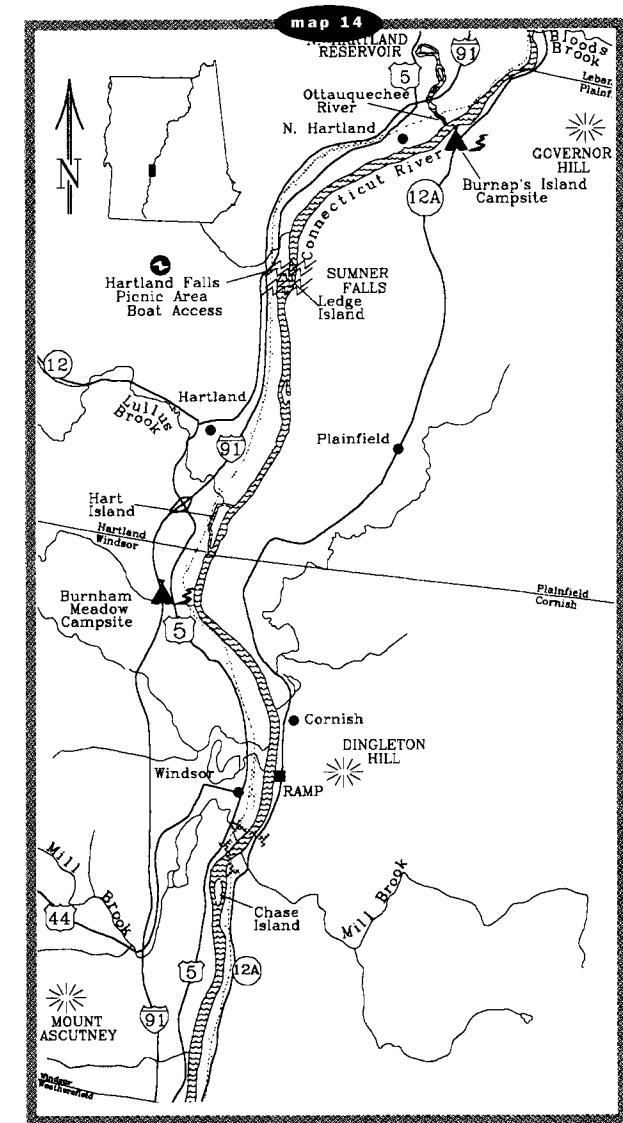
The town of Windsor, Vt. and all kinds of services are a short walk west from the bridge.

Within sight of the covered bridge, a railroad bridge spans the Connecticut and just downstream is Chase Island. A five mile straight section of river follows all the way to the Routes 12 and 103 bridge at Ascutney. Supplies can be purchased within walking distance on the Vermont side.

**map 15**

The Sugar River enters from New Hampshire at this point.

Wilgus State Park is located on the west bank about a mile below the bridge, just past a power line.



A fee is charged for camping.

Below Wilgus is Jarvis Island and between there and Hubbard Island is an access on the New Hampshire shore.

The Little Sugar River enters from the left and just downstream is Glidden Island.

Pass under the Cheshire toll bridge and turn right into the mouth of the Black River. A Fish and Wildlife Dept. boat access is located there just off Route 5.

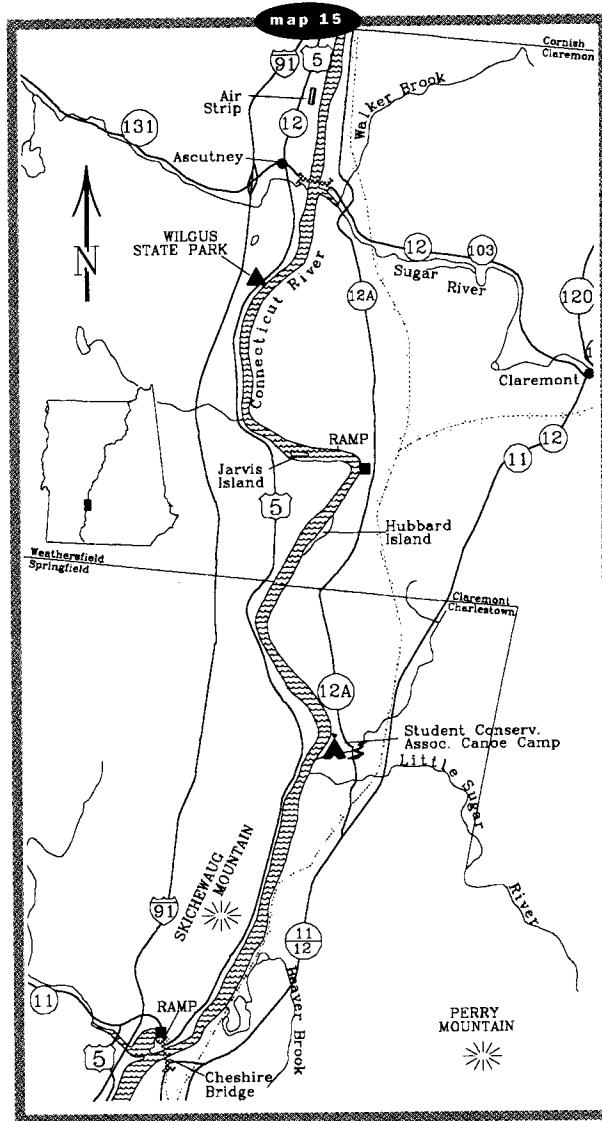
Supplies can be purchased a short walk towards Springfield, Vt. You will need to cross Route 5 and I-91.

It is 11 miles to the New England Power dam at Bellows Falls, Vt.

A mile below the tip of Weathersfield Bow pass Hubbard Island on the New Hampshire side. The Student Conservation Association Canoe Campsite is located a mile downstream on the outside of a westerly bend in the river. There are two small campsites.

#### map 16

About two miles below the toll bridge, the power company maintains a boat access and picnic area on the New Hampshire shore. Six miles farther on the Vermont shore the company maintains another access at a large picnic area known as Herrick's Cove. The Williams River enters from Vermont just below the Herrick's Cove access. Directly across from the mouth of the Williams River is New England Power's Lower Meadow Canoe Campsite located in a wooded copse.



Three miles downstream, you approach Bellows Falls and a series of bridges and canals. Paddle on the New Hampshire side until you reach the access and a portage maintained by New England Power.

The portage is long – a mile and a half along Route 12 – due to the length of the canal and gorge.

Bellows Falls Station was constructed in 1928, replacing an existing smaller hydro facility. The canal that brings water to the power station is 1,540 feet long and was originally constructed for navigational purposes. Completed in 1802, it was one of the earliest canals in the United States.

New England Power owns the dam and power station and operates a visitor center and fish ladder, which are popular attractions.

Services and supplies are available in Bellows Falls, Vt. and North Walpole, N.H.

Below the dam the river is quick and scenic all the way to Putney.

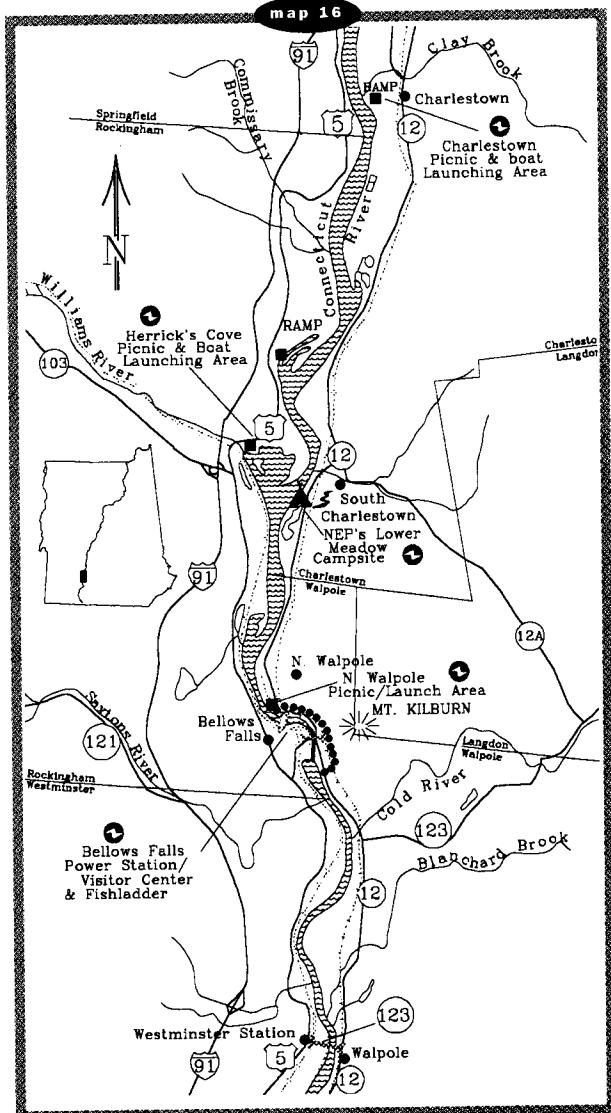
The Saxtons River enters from the west and the Cold River from the east.

Four miles from the Bellows Falls Dam, the Route 123 bridge crosses the river from Westminster, Vt. to Walpole, N.H.

#### map 17

Next to appear is Dunshee Island and in another four miles, Spencer Island.

As the river rounds Putney Great Meadows, the red barns of Windyhurst become visible high above. The Windyhurst Canoe Campsite is located in low woods downstream from a large field.



map 16

It is an easy seven mile paddle from Spencer Island to Putney, Vt.

map 18

Approximately seven miles below Putney you will pass under the Route 9 bridge. In another mile the West River enters from Vermont. Paddle up the West a short distance to the Retreat Meadows and explore this area known for its wildlife.

Just downstream of the West River is Brattleboro, Vt., a good sized town with all the amenities any canoeist could want.

The Route 119 bridge joins Brattleboro, Vt. and Hinsdale, N.H. and also spans a small island. The landing is on the west shore of the island just below the bridge.

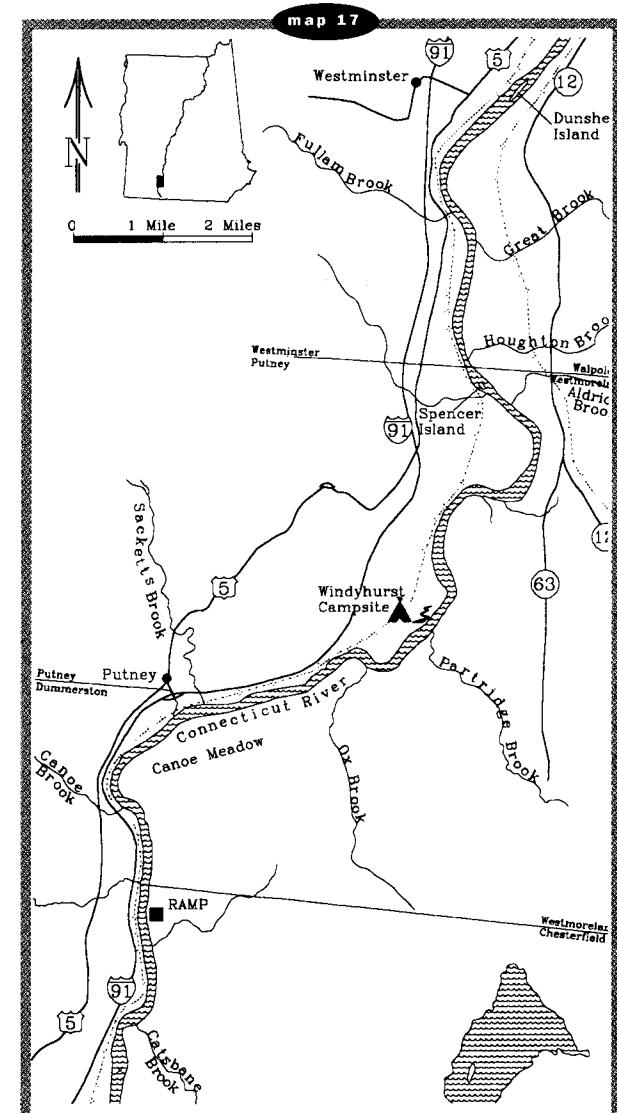
Inspirational Valley

Many famous painters, sculptors and writers have resided in the Connecticut River Valley. Rudyard Kipling was one who loved the river and the valley. A century ago he wrote *Captains Courageous*, *The Jungle Book* and *The Naulahka* while living in Brattleboro.

A railroad bridge crosses the river in another mile and from there to Vernon Dam the paddling is easy as the river passes by wetlands, marshes, and several islands.

About a mile below the railroad bridge, opposite a large lumber yard, is New England Power's Wantastiquet Canoe Campsite.

Just below the lumber yard on the Vermont side is an access point in a set back reached by passing



map 17

beneath a railroad causeway.

There is also an access area under the railroad causeway on the New Hampshire side above Vernon Dam.

The Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant is visible on the west side of the river. It has a visitor center and offers tours, but you must canoe past the plant and exit the river at the Vernon portage.

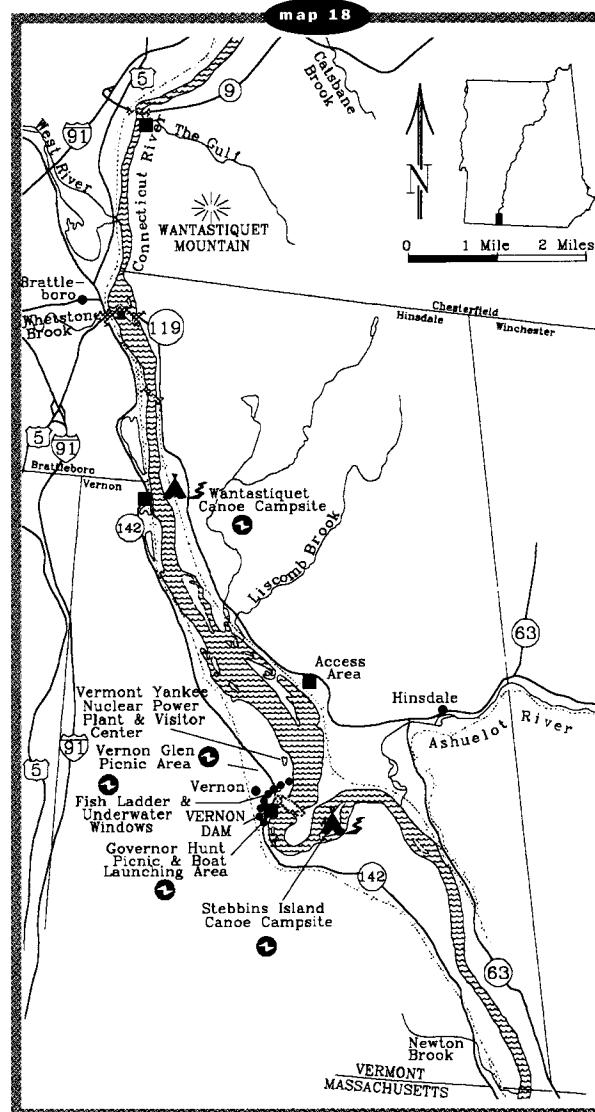
The portage is marked by signs on the Vermont side of the Vernon Dam. New England Power provides picnic areas at the dam for public use. A fish ladder and viewing window at the dam are also open to the public during the times of operation.

Vernon Dam was completed in 1909. The origins of New England Electric System can be traced to this facility, which was the beginning of a network of hydro and fossil fuel-fired stations now operated by New England Power.

A mile below Vernon is Stebbins Island. Two primitive campsites are located near the north end of the large island. Paddle east past two-thirds of the island and turn up a small channel to the campsites.

A bit farther downstream, the Ashuelot River enters from New Hampshire. A one mile paddle up the tributary will lead to Hinsdale, N.H. and to supplies. It is six miles from Vernon Dam to the Massachusetts border.

That border is 132 miles from the mouth of the Connecticut, 236 miles from Canaan, and 278 miles from the source at Fourth Connecticut Lake.



### The Border Question

When a river forms the border between two states, the boundary is generally in the middle of the river. Not so with the Connecticut. The boundary between Vermont and New Hampshire is defined as, "the natural low water mark on the Vermont side."

The boundary was set by the U.S. Supreme Court in a decree issued on January 8, 1934. The date is key as Moore Dam was completed in 1957 and the boundary is where it was in 1934. Thus Vermont has jurisdiction over a large portion of the reservoir behind Moore Dam.

### Hunting and Fishing on the Connecticut

Hunters and anglers have long had difficulty determining just what their licenses allow them to do on the Connecticut River. The publications of the two states only clarify part of the question.

A document titled, "Agreement Between State of Vermont Fish & Wildlife Dept. & NH Fish & Game Dept. Connecticut River Regulations", signed by representatives of both states, answers the question. "This Regulation shall become effective on March 5, 1992 and shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded."

Another paragraph, which discusses liability for prosecution station states, "Violators of the provisions of this part shall be liable to prosecution under the laws of either Vermont or New Hampshire."

Vermont or New Hampshire fishing licenses, resident or nonresident, allow fishing anywhere in the Connecticut River lying between these states,

according to the following regulations printed in the Vermont Digest of Fish & Wildlife Laws and in the New Hampshire Freshwater Fishing Digest.

“Connecticut River” means all waters of the river including bays, setbacks and tributaries, only to the first highway bridge crossing said tributaries on the Vermont and New Hampshire sides.”

The key words are highway bridge. This means that the waters of the tributaries as far upstream as the first highway bridge are considered Connecticut River waters. Railroad bridges are not counted. In some cases such as the Waits River, over a mile of a tributary is under New Hampshire regulation.

Read the digests carefully. Connecticut River regulations are different. For example, they say, “The season for taking brook, brown or rainbow trout by all legal methods shall open on January 1 and close October 15.” So, three and a half months before the Vermont trout season opens you can legally take such fish in sections of the Passumpsic, Wells, Waits or other tributaries of the Connecticut.

Anglers most often ask, “Can I fish from the New Hampshire shore with a Vermont license and can I fish from the Vermont shore with a New Hampshire license?” The answer to both questions is yes, according to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department.

Do not confuse fishing with hunting or trapping. Only holders of New Hampshire licenses may hunt or trap on the river.

There are certain exceptions, with the most signif-

icant being Moore and Comerford Reservoirs. If you check the topographical maps you will find that Vermont has jurisdiction over a good portion of the reservoirs. Vermont license holders may hunt or trap in those waters within the state of Vermont.

### **Canoe Campsites**

The Upper Valley Land Trust has coordinated the establishment of a system of primitive canoe campsites along the river since 1992. Currently it has developed 17 sites, and more are in the planning stage. Four of the canoe sites are owned and maintained by New England Power. The campsites are marked by blue on yellow signs that depict a tent and a river.

### **Further Reading**

Those new to the river can enhance their understanding and enjoyment of the Connecticut by doing some further reading. We suggest:

*The Complete Boating Guide To The Connecticut River* by The Connecticut River Watershed Council

*AMC Quiet Water Canoe Guide New Hampshire Vermont* by Alex Wilson

*The Connecticut River, New England's Historic Waterway* by Edmund Delaney

*Voyage of the Ant* by James Dina

*Upstream A Voyage on the Connecticut River* by Ben Bachman

Robert Pike, who was born in 1905 and raised on a farm overlooking the Connecticut River in Upper

Waterford, Vt. has written three books that anyone who spends time on the river should read. *Spiked Boots, Drama on the Connecticut, and Tall Trees, Tough Men...*take the reader back to the days of log drives on the river and its tributaries and the hardships endured by those intrepid men and women who worked in the woods and on the drives. As you dip your paddle in the waters of the Connecticut think what it must have been like a century ago.

## For Safety

New England Power has installed a river information hot line. You can call the following toll-free number to get information about the river flows below the company's dams:

**1-888-FLOFONE**

(1-888-356-3668)

**For more information about the river, please contact:**

New England Power Company  
407 Miracle Mile  
Lebanon, NH 03766  
603-448-2200

Upper Valley Land Trust  
19 Buck Road  
Hanover, NH 03755  
603-643-6626

Connecticut River Watershed Council  
One Ferry Street  
Easthampton, MA 01027  
413-529-9500

Connecticut River Joint Commissions  
P.O. Box 1182  
Charlestown, NH 03603  
603-826-4800

New England Power Company (NEP) is the wholesale operating subsidiary of New England Electric System (NEES), headquartered in Westborough, Mass. NEP owns and operates 19 generating stations, including 14 hydroelectric power plants which represent New England's largest renewable energy system. NEP provides electricity to retail electric companies including New England Electric (NEES) subsidiaries, Massachusetts Electric Company, Narragansett Electric Company and Granite State Electric Company; municipal light departments in Massachusetts and New Hampshire; and other utilities including Green Mountain Power and the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative.

*Users of this guide are encouraged to notify  
Gary W. Moore, Box 454, Bradford, VT 05033  
of any mistakes or omissions that are discovered.*

