

GLOSSARY OF PADDLING TERMS

Boat Ramp: A public launch ramp that is available for power boats as well as canoes and kayaks. See also canoe launch.

Bony: An adjective paddlers use to describe rocky, scratchy conditions due to low water.

Bow and Stern: The front and back ends of a boat, respectively.

Canoe Launch: A less developed public launch site that is suitable for launching canoes and kayaks by hand. See also boat ramp.

Cubic Feet per Second, or "cfs": River flow is measured as the number of cubic feet of water flowing past a certain point each second; it's called cfs for short. River gages provide online readings updated every 15 minutes, with graphs showing trends.

Eddy: A back-current along the edge of a river. Eddies are a good place to pull off to the side, out of the main current, to rest and re-group, or land. Be careful as you cross into an eddy as your boat may become less stable momentarily.

Flatwater: A section of river with no current, usually due to impounded water behind a dam.

Impoundment: A body of flatwater held behind a dam.

Lee: An adjective, meaning sheltered or away from the wind. By staying close to the lee shore, you'll be exposed to less wind and paddling will be easier.

Painter: A length of rope (known as a line) tied to the bow or stern.

PFD – Personal Flotation Device: The Coast Guard has shifted back to calling them life jackets. No matter the name, they only work if you wear them.

Portage: Derived from French, it means "to carry." A portage is the trail you walk to go around an obstruction (like a dam) or from one water body to another. It's also a verb that means to carry your boat and gear.

Quickwater: Stretches of river with enough current to carry the boat and create ripples, but not as steep or rough as rapids. Generally, you can navigate quickwater by following the main current. Also known as Class I whitewater (see below).

River Left and River Right: Refers to the river as you face downstream. As in, "Watch for the big rock on river left."

Rock Garden: A section of river with many partially submerged rocks. It's usually applied to areas with swift current where strong paddling skills are needed to dodge rocks.

Strainer: A fallen tree, partially submerged in the current, so the limbs and branches "strain" the water. People and boats pushed by current into a strainer put themselves and rescuers in extreme danger!

Sweep: An experienced paddler who remains the last boat in a group. He or she makes sure nobody is left behind and is ready to help with rescues.

USGS: Stands for the US Geological Survey. This agency and the US Army Corps of Engineers maintain a network of river gages to register water level and flow data online every 15 minutes. These readings are useful to decide whether the river flow is too low, too high or just right for your skills and equipment.

Whitewater: Stretches of river with enough flow and rocks to create breaking waves of water. On the standardized scale from I to V of whitewater difficulty, the Quinebaug has Class I (also called quickwater) and a few Class II spots at higher water levels.

(Adapted from www.AmericanWhitewater.org)

Class I: Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. There are few obstructions, all obvious and easily avoided with little training.

Class II: Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium-sized waves are easily avoided by trained paddlers.



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Paddle Guide

for the
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**National Recreation Water Trails in
 The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor
 Eastern Connecticut and South-Central Massachusetts**

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