

## Public Access to the lower Farmington River, Salmon Brook and Their Corridors

The ten lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Study towns all have some public access both to land directly adjacent to the watercourses and provide some water access. A combination of town, state and private (land trust) properties open to the public offer many recreational opportunities including walking, biking, bird watching, photography, fishing, canoeing and kayaking.

### Salmon Brook Access

The Wild and Scenic Study Area towns with Salmon Brook frontage are **Hartland, Granby** and **East Granby**. Of all the Study towns, only **East Granby** has frontage on both the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook, although **Hartland** has frontage on the Upper Farmington River, already designated as Wild and Scenic.

**Hartland's** Alice Merritt Park has a town swimming area which is not directly on the upper reaches of Salmon Brook, but on a headwater tributary. Also, the west branch of Salmon Brook runs through Tunxis State Forest in Hartland and provides direct public access to Salmon Brook. In **Granby**, the town's Salmon Brook Park fronts on Salmon Brook and the brook is accessible from the park. The park itself has a manmade (seasonal) swimming pond and many other amenities. McLean Game Refuge, open to the public, also has Salmon Brook frontage both across the brook from Salmon Brook Park and near Barn Door Hills road. The Barn Door Hills Rd. entrance picnic area is used for informal wading and playing in the brook. In **East Granby**, Granbrook Park lies along Salmon Brook. It offers a variety of recreational opportunities including brook access, playing fields, tennis courts, and a playground.

### Lower Farmington River Access

**Burlington** has a section of the Farmington River Trail along the short stretch of the Farmington that runs through the northeast corner of the town. The trail is readily accessible from a parking area on Rt. 179. The same parking area is adjacent to a Put-in spot for canoes and kayaks, and a little further downstream there is a second put-in near the junction of Rt.4/179. (See The Farmington River Guide, Section 4 for a description of the river in this area.)

In **Farmington**, the Farmington River Trail runs along the river in the Unionville section and connects to the Farmington Valley Greenway at Meadow Rd. and Red Oak Hill Rd. Tunxis Mead, a town recreation area, is located on the river. It is the location of many of the town's sports fields and a section of the Farmington River Trail runs through it. It is also recognized as a good place for birding (see Recreation). The Farmington Land Trust's Canal and Walker properties not only offer walking access to the Farmington River but feature remnants of the historically important Farmington Canal. Access is off Rt. 10. There are several sites along the river to put in or take out canoes or kayaks (See The River Guide for specific locations.) and a number of other properties open to the public lie along the river.

Although **Avon** shares a short south-flowing stretch of the Farmington with Burlington, Avon's river access areas are located in the eastern part of town on the north-flowing section of the river. Fisher Meadows, a large town-owned recreation area on the Farmington offers walking paths along the river's bank and opportunities for jogging and cross-country skiing as well as a complex of sports fields set back from the river. Alsop Meadow, another town park, provides canoe and kayak access to the river and also walking, hiking, jogging, and cross country skiing. It also has two playing fields and community gardens plots. The Farmington

Valley Greenway runs through **Avon**. It has a long stretch near the river as it passes by Nod Brook Management Area that abuts the Farmington.

The Nod Brook Management Area is a state-owned property dedicated to field dog trials. It is closed to the general public when those are in process. Straddling the border of **Avon** and **Simsbury**, it is used for walking, dog walking, and as an access route to the river when not in use for field trials. The Farmington Valley Greenway in **Simsbury** runs close to the Farmington and provides walking, biking and roller blading opportunities. The Simsbury Wildlife Management Area is a state-owned property abutting the river on the east and west banks and is used for bird hunting in season. In **Simsbury** there is canoe and kayak access to the river at the town's Pinchot Sycamore site, at a put-in on River Rd. and at two town parks, Curtiss Park and Tariffville Park which offer other amenities including sports fields and fishing.

The Metacomet Trail traverses the Metacomet Ridge of central Connecticut and is part of the newly designated New England National Scenic Trail. Despite being easily accessible, the trail is considered remarkably rugged and scenic. The trail offers scenic views of the Farmington River in **Simsbury** and a scenic overlook of the River occurs in the town of **East Granby** before the trail descends to river level and crosses into Tariffville in **Simsbury**. Cowles Park in **East Granby** also overlooks the Farmington River and has hiking and walking trails. It extends down toward the river and abuts Tunxis Avenue. Access to Tariffville Gorge, a recognized whitewater canoeing and kayaking area is primarily in **East Granby** off Tunxis Avenue, although upriver access is also available just prior to the whitewater features in Tariffville in **Simsbury**. River access below the whitewater of the Gorge is just to the south off the Tunxis Rd.

CL&P also owns a large parcel of land adjacent to the Tariffville Gorge in **East Granby** and **Bloomfield**. The CL&P property in **Bloomfield** and **East Granby** is open to the public without charge and provides opportunities on the Farmington River for kayaking, canoeing, and fishing. Canoe and kayak access to the upper reaches of Rainbow Reservoir is available from Tunxis Avenue in East Granby near the 187 bridge. The wooded portion of the property is managed for forest health and wildlife habitat, and bow-hunting is allowed in the **Bloomfield** section. **Bloomfield** also has river frontage at its Farmington River Park where there is fishing, hiking and picnicking.

In **Windsor** a state boat launch on Merriman Street provides access to the impoundment on the Farmington upstream from Farmington River Power Company's (a Stanley Black & Decker company) Rainbow Dam. The town-managed Northwest Park, 473 acres on the shore of Rainbow Reservoir, offers hiking trails, including one along the shore of the reservoir, and many other recreational opportunities such as cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, birding, a Nature Center and playground. At the town's Strawberry Hills Park, it is possible to launch a canoe or kayak. Another spot for putting in or taking out in **Windsor** is at Pleasant Street Park. (See the River Guide for information on all put-in and take out points.) The Windsor Town website provides the following description of the Windsor Center Trail.

Windsor Center Trail, also known as The Riverwalk, is located on a 43 acre site adjacent to the Farmington River at Route 159. This trail is 1.25 miles long and has direct access to over 2,000 feet of river. It ties into an existing park and boat launch on Pleasant Street and will eventually be part of a regional trail network. Today, this trail is shared by hikers, joggers, rollerbladers and bicycle riders.

Some of businesses/groups that offer paddling trips and outings on the Farmington River include Collinsville Canoe & Kayak, Huck Finn Adventures, The AMC, The Small Boat Shop, The Green Mountain Club, and Farmington River Tubing.