

Canoe / Kayak Guide Mill River



City of New Haven
Department of Parks,
Recreation and Trees

John DeStefano, Jr., Mayor
Robert D. Levine, Director

Canoeing Information

Canoe Zone

Covered bridge at Eli Whitney Museum

Trail Length

3 miles roundtrip

Launch Points

At Orange St bridge on west bank near Wilbur Cross High School

Directions

From 1-91:

Exit 6 - Turn right onto Willow Street to end of ramp.
Right on Mitchell Drive to first traffic light.

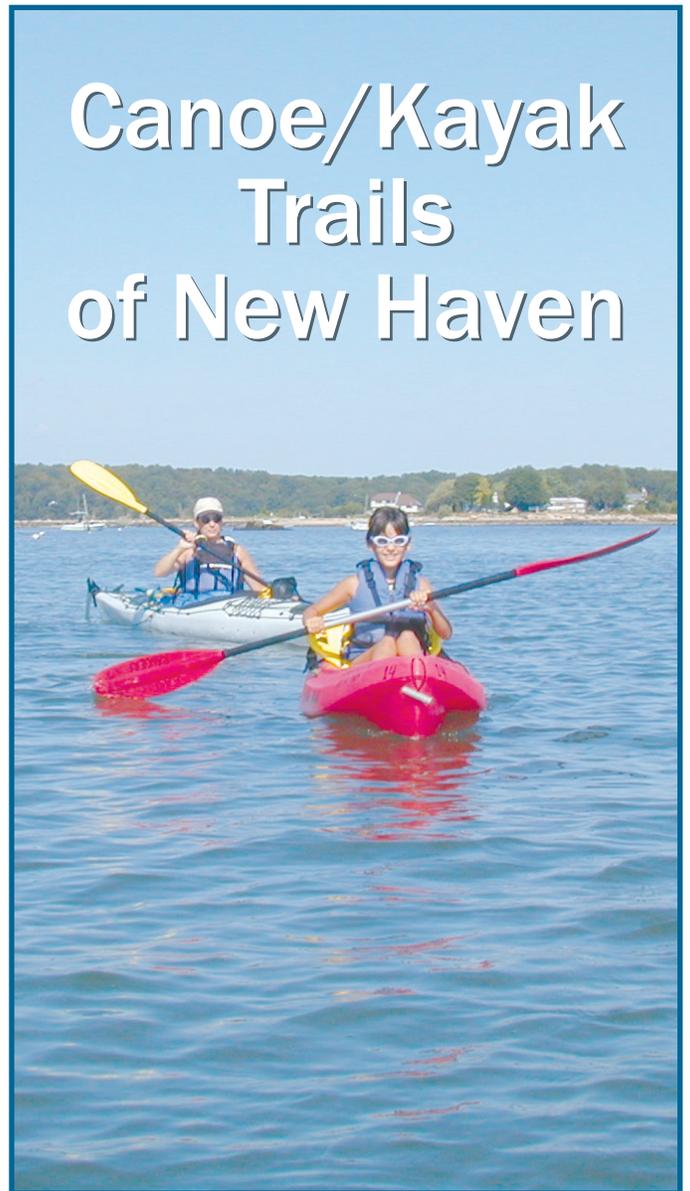
From Wilbur Cross Parkway:

Exit 61 - Whitney Avenue Exit towards New Haven.
At flashing yellow light turn left onto Cold Spring Street.

From Downtown New Haven:

Church Street north towards Hamden (changes name to Whitney Avenue).
At flashing yellow light turn left onto Cold Spring Street.

Canoe/Kayak Trails of New Haven



Safety Tips

1. Always wear a life jacket, even if you're a good swimmer.
2. Don't rock or stand up in the canoe.
3. If your boat flips, stay with the canoe.
4. Watch out for brush, fallen trees and other objects that could capsize your canoe.
5. In an emergency, grab anything that floats.
6. Always paddle directly into or away from the wake of larger boats.
7. Keep a safe distance from wildlife!

For more information, contact:

Outdoor Adventure Coordinator at (203) 946-6768
www.cityofnewhaven.com/parks

Mill River

Mill River

The Mill River sits alongside East Rock, a large/ trap-rock ridge weathered to a lovely shade somewhere between burnt orange and deep rose. During the early years of New Haven history, the river meandered through a floodplain unfettered. In 1798, Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin, built his musket factory on the banks of the Mill, changing the river and industrial manufacturing forever. In 1880, the rock, the river and surrounding land became part of East Rock Park. The park is known as one of the best birding sites in Connecticut. More than 200 species of birds have been recorded in East Rock Park, many of which are rarely seen anywhere else in the state.

The sheer face of East Rock dominates the upper stretch of the Mill River. Viewing East Rock from the river is always a unique experience, depending on the time of day and the sunlight. In early morning, East Rock is a light grayish color, whereas it turns a deep rose during sunset. The summit of East Rock can be reached by numerous hiking trails within the park and provides spectacular views from the top. Look for turkey vultures and hawks soaring on the hot air currents.

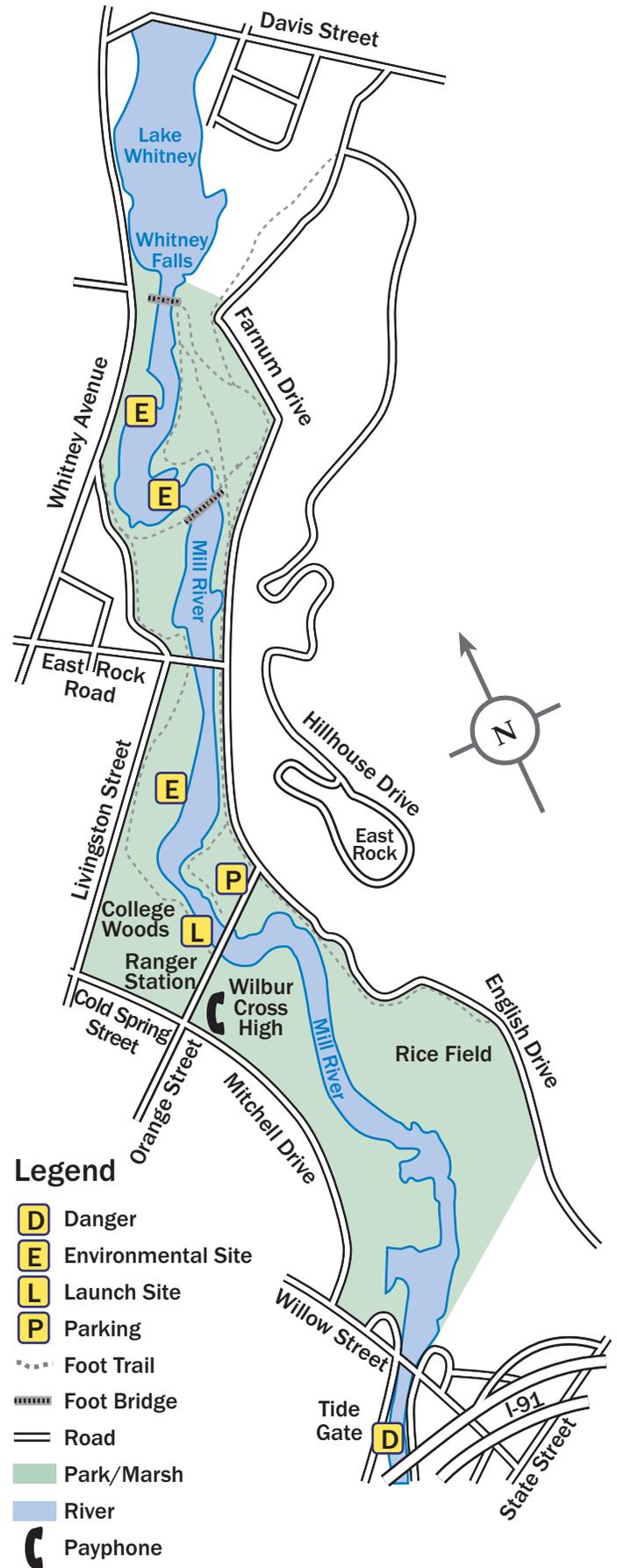
Bird watching on the Mill River offers a great opportunity to see a wide diversity of species. Both the magnificent black-crowned and green-backed herons can be seen in the upper part of the river. Depending on the season, you can also expect to see kingfishers, red-winged blackbirds, and numerous species of ducks and other nesting birds. The spring warbler migration, which includes over 20 species, is worth seeing.

Passing under the footbridge, you can people watch or examine the various plant species along the banks, from willow trees that shade the river to bullrushes, reeds and lily pads. Below Orange Street, the river becomes wider and slower with fewer bends. Phragmites dominates the riverbanks and the adjacent marsh, where canoeists may be able to see muskrats and occasionally other small mammals like otters, foxes and raccoons.

Fishing is permitted throughout the river system. Near the Whitney Dam, you'll find two-inch-long sticklebacks, carp, white perch, killifish, and mummichog, and you can occasionally spot painted turtles sunning on logs and on the banks. You also might be able to catch yellow perch, bluegills, eels, and large mouth bass. Blue crabs are abundant and can easily be found during the summer.

Canoeing Tips

1. The water level changes hourly. There is a noticeable current so paddling upstream will take longer.
2. Be aware of the tide gates near U.S. Route 91 and Walker Rink. They are impassable.



Mill River at East Rock Park