



# The Assabet River Pocket Guide

*A Recreation Guide  
to the Assabet River*



## The Assabet River

“A more lovely stream than this,” Nathaniel Hawthorne said of the Assabet River, “has never flowed on earth, except to lave the interior regions of a poet’s imagination.” Much of the river is still beautiful today, with surprisingly remote and unspoiled sections. In 1999, four miles of the Assabet were designated under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers program.

The Assabet River begins in Westborough, flowing north for 31 miles through Northborough, Marlborough, Berlin, Hudson, Stow, Maynard, and Acton until it joins the Sudbury River in the town of Concord to form the Concord River. The river is home to abundant wildlife, including great blue herons, river otters, osprey, and painted turtles.

Despite an abundance of dams, difficult passage in the upper reaches, and even a bit of seasonal whitewater, the Assabet offers some easy and interesting paddles for the beginning canoeist or kayaker. We especially recommend the three trips highlighted in purple on the map.

### River Safety

Although the majority of the Assabet River flows gently, please be aware that dams, high water (and low bridges), downed trees, and seasonal rapids can pose serious hazards to boaters. Please be careful and wear a life jacket. You can check with OAR if unsure of the conditions.

### OAR

*The Organization for the Assabet River* (OAR) was established to preserve and enhance the river, its tributaries, and watershed. A membership organization with a small staff and an active board, OAR was founded in 1986 in response to citizen concerns about odors and pollution in the Assabet.

The Assabet is much improved since OAR’s founding days, but has some distance to go before the river is truly “fishable and swimmable.” The Assabet River suffers from nutrient pollution, creating excessive plant growth in the summer. Through our water quality and flow monitoring, advocacy, annual river cleanups and other programs, OAR has accomplished a great deal with limited resources. OAR needs your support to continue protecting this wonderful river and its watershed.

### Helpful Resources

#### Books:

*The Concord, Sudbury, and Assabet Rivers: A guide to canoeing, wildlife and history.*  
By Ron McAdow. Bliss Publishing Company, Marlborough, MA. 1997. Available through OAR.

#### Websites:

- OAR: [www.assabeteriver.org](http://www.assabeteriver.org)
- Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge: [assabeteriver.fws.gov](http://assabeteriver.fws.gov)
- Assabet River Rail Trail: [www.arrtinc.org](http://www.arrtinc.org)
- Mass Audubon: [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org)
- SVT: [www.sudburyvalleytrustees.org](http://www.sudburyvalleytrustees.org)
- Wild & Scenic River Stewardship Council: [www.sudbury-assabet-concord.org](http://www.sudbury-assabet-concord.org)

**To find out more,**  
please visit our website at [www.assabeteriver.org](http://www.assabeteriver.org).  
**Organization for the Assabet River**  
Damonmill Square, Concord, MA 01742 (978) 369-3956.



**The Assabet Reservoir in Westborough. See the other side for the complete river.**

OAR thanks our project partners and sponsors:

**Sponsors:** Intel Massachusetts, Inc.  
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