



We speak for the river

An introductory booklet
to the Scantic River

October 2005

INTRODUCTION

The Scantic River Watershed Association, reestablished in 2002, has recently completed a survey of the entire river from its origin in Stafford to the point where it joins the Connecticut River in East Windsor Hill. We are currently compiling the information and plan to publish a field guide in the near future; however in the meantime we wanted to publish this booklet to give you an overview and interest you in the Scantic River.

The Scantic River Watershed Association was originally started in 1972 by a group of concerned citizens to preserve and protect the natural resources of the river and surrounding watershed. After years of valuable service, SRWA dissolved and its assets were left to the Northern Connecticut Land Trust (NCLT) for safekeeping.

In 2002, NCLT felt the time was right to reintroduce SRWA to the region, fulfilling the role of watchdog and protector of the river and its environs. Although the SRWA operates separately from the NCLT the association is unique in that the Land Trust is able to purchase properties along the Scantic. Such an achievement has been accomplished in Somers where 47 acres have been procured and, with many hours of volunteer time, has been transformed into the "Scantic Riparian Area".

The recent "River Walk Survey" found that there are many sections of the Scantic that are blocked by fallen trees and debris, thus making it difficult to navigate. The main project for 2006 will be to clean up these areas and hopefully make a "canoe trail" along the river. Please feel free to contact us if you are interested in working on this project.

Membership and other information is always available by contacting us at ScanticRWA@yahoo.com or SRWA, Box 303, Somers, CT 06071.



HISTORY OF THE SCANTIC

Named for the Scantuck Indians, the Scantic River watershed drains some 90,000 acres in Connecticut and Massachusetts. It is fed by several small tributaries, of which many are considered "Class A" water quality (suitable for drinking).

The Town of Hampden, Mass., settled in 1841, contains a substantial number of Scantic River miles and in the past, these miles hosted a number of flourishing mills. Dependent upon the Scantic's water power, the mills prospered but as the years passed a lack of transportation from mill site to market made commerce increasingly difficult until gradually the mill wheels fell silent. Ruins of the mills are still evident.

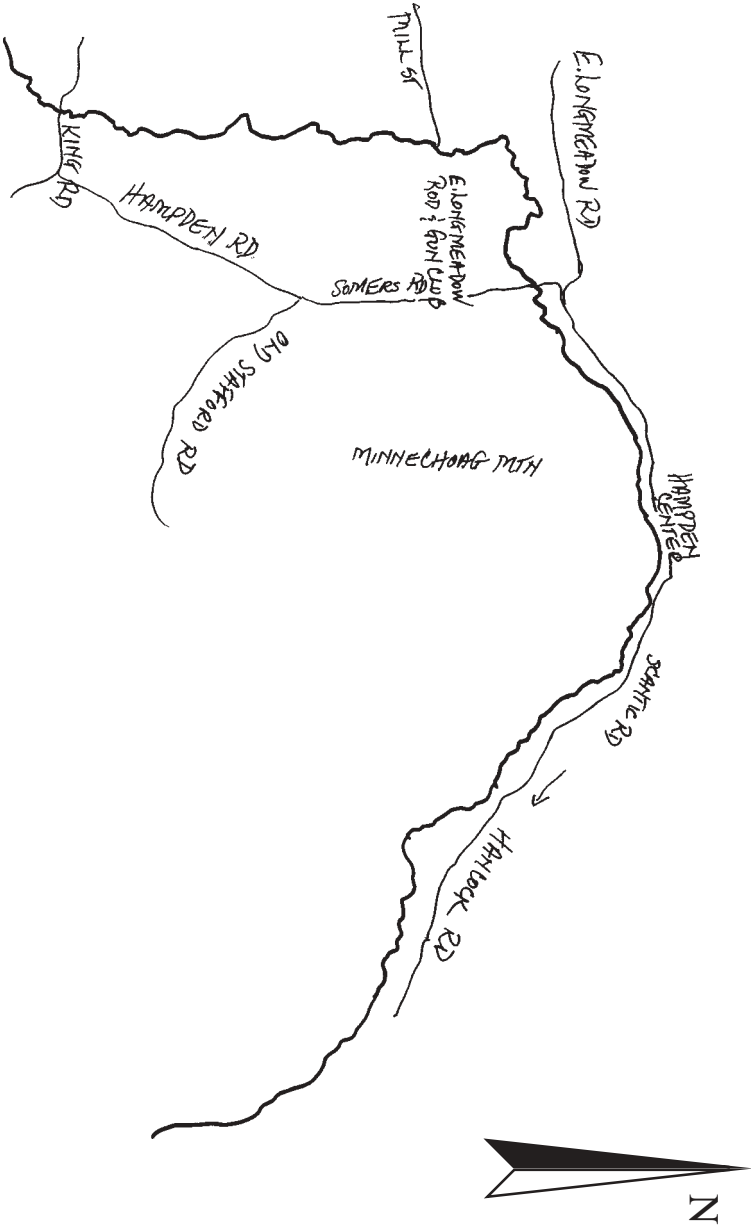
Host of seasonal runs of shad and salmon, the river was a source of food, waterpower and irrigation for early settlers of the area. In the 1800's, Colonel Augustus Hazard founded the Hazard Powder Company, on the banks of the Scantic in what became Hazardville. The company supplied the Union armies during the Civil War with much of its gunpowder. The Hazard Powder Company disappeared in a mighty blast in 1913; however, some of the foundations are still intact and the area is now known as "Powder Hollow".

In 1728, Ebenezer Grant of East Windsor built a shipyard at the confluence of the Scantic and Connecticut Rivers. Located just below the Enfield Rapids, the enterprise thrived until some time after 1812, when it gradually came to a close.

There is a great deal more history about the Scantic, which we hope to publish in the near future. Anyone having information or anecdotes please contact us at ScanticRWA@yahoo.com or SRWA, Box 303, Somers, CT 06071.



STAFFORD & HAMPDEN



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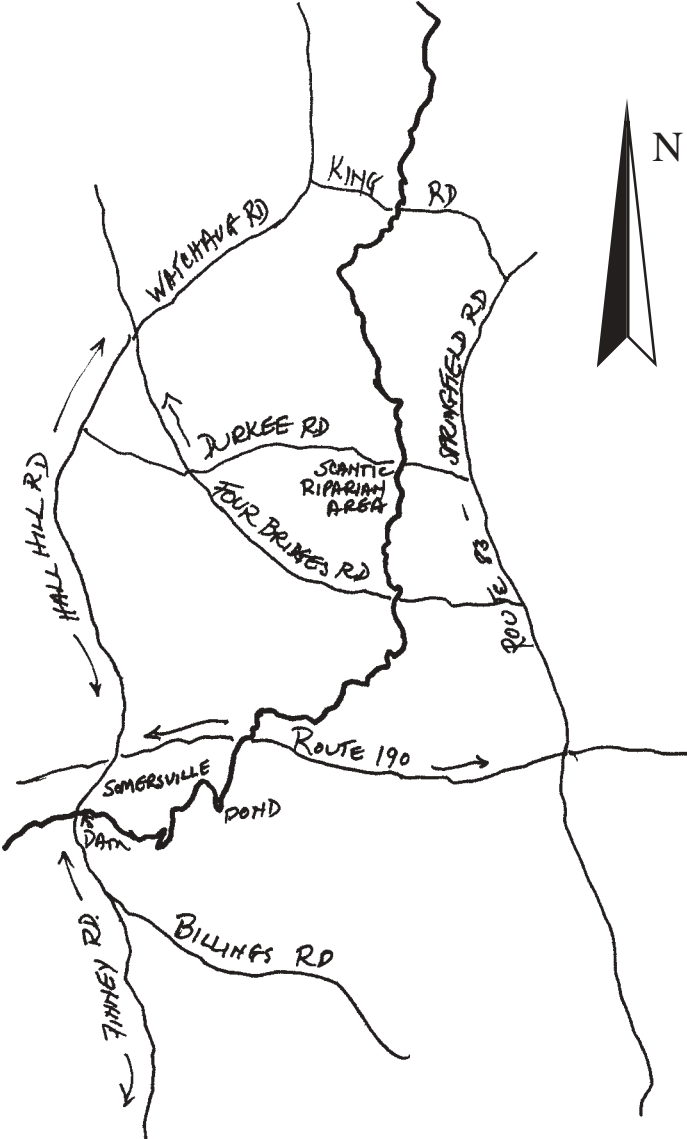
The origin of the Scantic River emerges from Tray Hollow and Culver Pond in Stafford. The beginnings of the river are very swampy and difficult to define but become clearer as it reaches the town of Hampden. It also takes a small turn into the town of Munson.

Not much of the river is navigable at this writing. There is an access point at Laughing Brook which takes you down river towards the center of town; however, it is important to take out around the VFW building as there is a dam just beyond there. Much of this area has open fields on both sides with some residential areas. It is apparent that many of the residents have an interest in the river and use it on occasion.

Minnechoag Mountain rises to the left going down stream. It is reported that there are some interesting hiking trails in this area. Although the SRWA has been focused in the Connecticut area, we are very anxious to get more information about Hampden and how the river played a part in the history of this area. Anyone having this information please contact us at ScanticRWA@yahoo.com or SRWA, Box 303, Somers, CT 06071



MILL POND IN SOMERSVILLE TO DURKEE ROAD

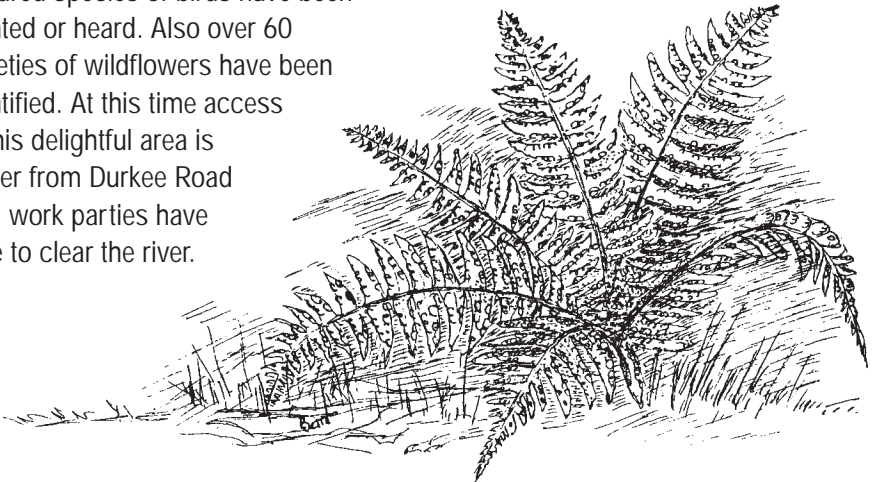


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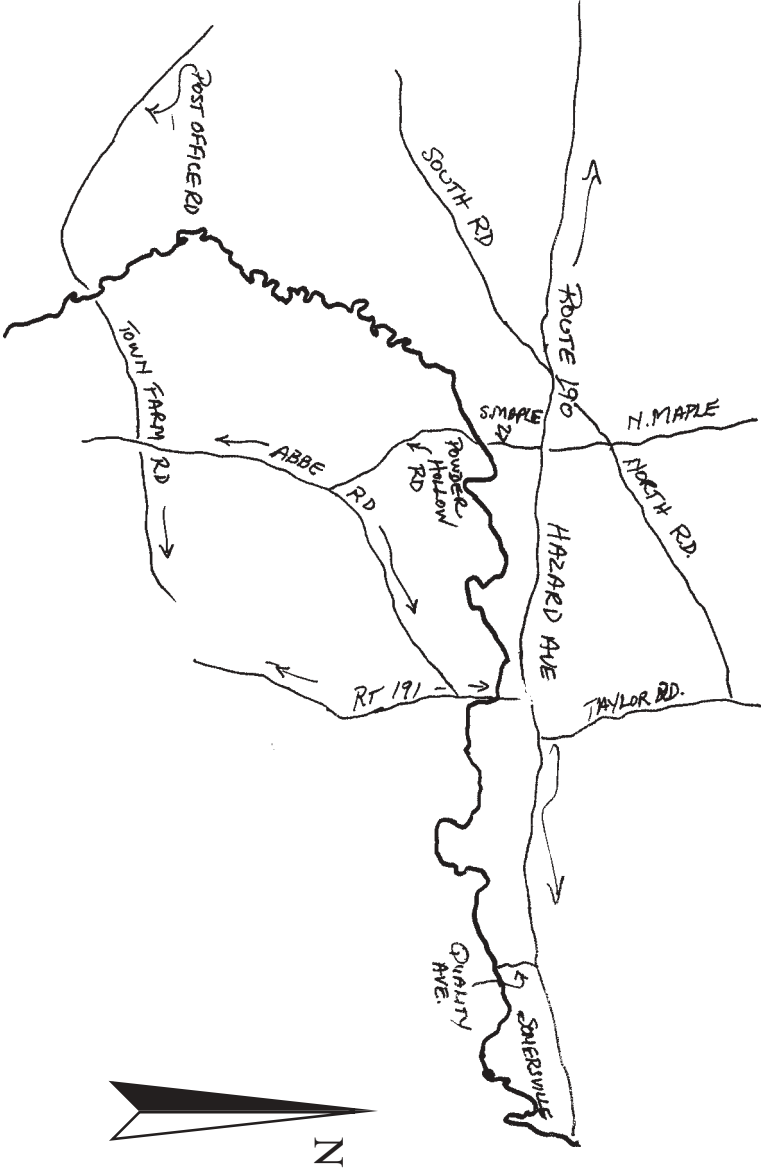


The easiest access point to the northern section of the Scantic is at Mill Pond in Somersville, which has been created by a dam at the same point. Good fishing as well. As you enter the pond be sure to bear off left – the dam is to the right. You will continue on, meandering through the pond until it narrows and becomes the river. The first landmark is at the intersection with Route 190 where you will go under the bridge – just beyond is another access point on the left. The river becomes narrower after this point and further along there are some weeds that may inhibit your trip when the river is low. The next access point is just before the bridge that crosses

Four Bridges Road. All through this area you will find good fishing spots as well as viewing for birds and other wildlife. As you approach Durkee Road you will enter an area known as the **“SCANTIC RIPARIAN AREA”**. The area on the left has been procured by the Northern CT Land Trust and has been enhanced by its volunteers to create a lovely hiking trail along the edge of the river. Over a hundred species of birds have been sighted or heard. Also over 60 varieties of wildflowers have been identified. At this time access to this delightful area is easier from Durkee Road until work parties have time to clear the river.



SOMERSVILLE DAM TO POWDER HOLLOW



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This section of the river is where the famous **“SCANTIC SPRING SPLASH”** downriver canoe and kayak race is held each year. It is usually held the last weekend in March and people from all over the east coast come to participate in this exciting and challenging race.

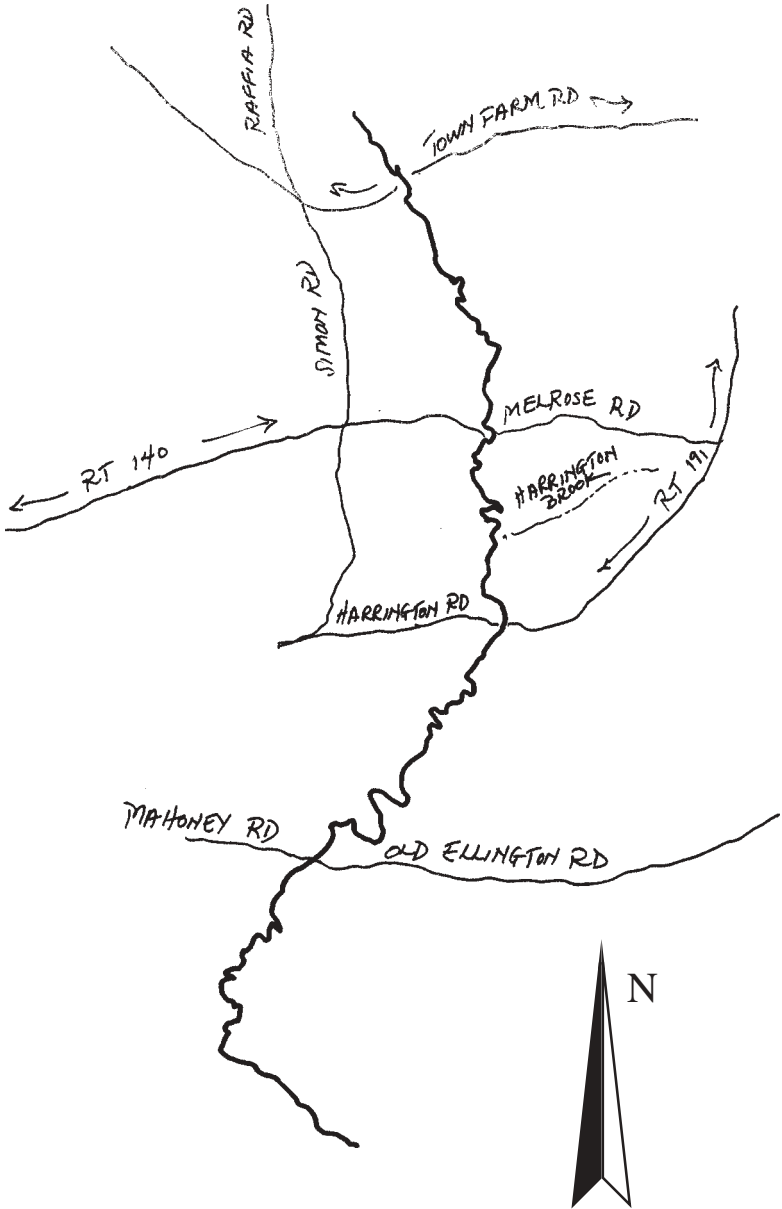
The access point for the first section starting just below the Somersville dam is at the end of Quality Ave. in Somersville. The entrance to Quality Ave. is about 50 yards west of the intersection of the main traffic light in Somersville. This section is best in the spring or during times of high water. It is suitable for a beginner/novice canoeist or kayaker. The take out point is before the dam at Springborn Labs. There is also an excellent hiking trail along the river in the Scantic River Rapids State Park, which leads to the historical ruins left over from the Powder Mill.

The next section from the dam to South Maple Street is for experienced Class II paddlers and is not recommended for the Novice. The river can be portaged or scouted on river right about 200 yards downstream from the dam. This area is called Stockers Rip and from here to the South Maple Street Bridge in Enfield is about 2 miles. The take out is on the right bank after the bridge.

Other areas in Enfield are not navigable at this time. Hopefully more will open up in 2006 as we continue on our endeavor to create a “canoe trail”.



TOWN FARM ROAD IN ENFIELD TO
MAHONEY RD. IN EAST WINDSOR



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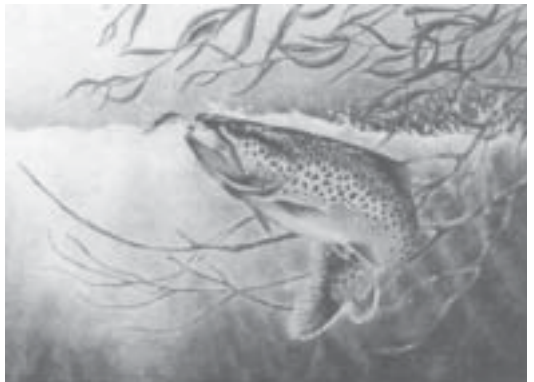


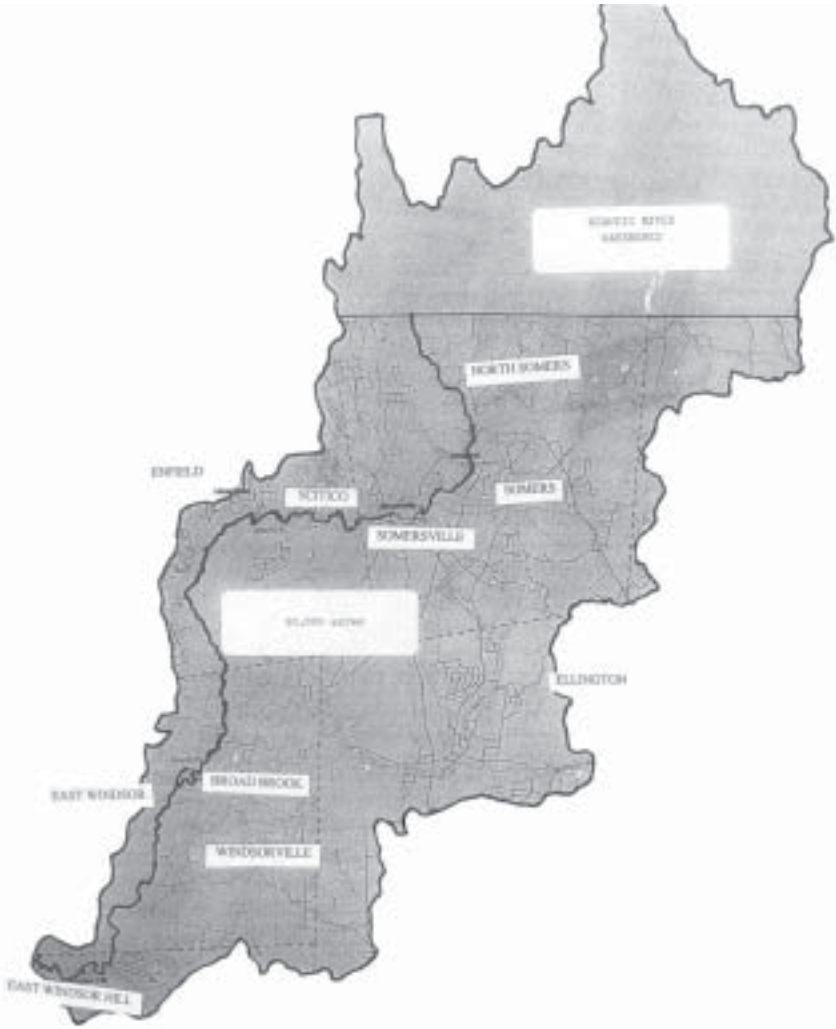
There are several access points going downstream from Enfield through East Windsor towards its confluence with the Connecticut River in East Windsor Hill. You can start at Town Farm Road in Enfield - the next point would be in Melrose around the remains of the suspension bridge – on to the next point at the filter beds, they just before the remains of another bridge – the last take out point is at Mahoney Rd.

This is truly a beautiful stretch of the Scantic. There is a good deal of undeveloped land on both sides of the river since the adjacent property is owned by the Town of East Windsor and the State of Connecticut. Due to this there is considerable protection for wildlife such

as songbirds, muskrat, deer, owls, and beaver. Since there are many overhanging trees, it is also home to a variety of fish.

The one caveat, however, is that there are many fallen trees blocking the river particularly in the area from Town Farm Rd. to Melrose. As mentioned earlier, one of the SRWA's projects in 2006 is to create a "canoe trail" and this is one of the areas we will be targeting. Anyone interested in helping to clear the river please contact us at ScanticRWA@yahoo.com.





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