

# LiveStream Season 2, Episode 4

## Tales from the Trail: Explore the Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail

3-31-21

### Q&A

Thank you to all who attended this event. Below you will find each question from the chat and the corresponding answer for those who were unable to attend and for the questions we couldn't get to. We will use these questions to create a FAQ page on the [CT River Paddlers' Trail website](#). Thanks again!

1. Are there safety protocols or special licenses needed before you get on the river?
  - ◆ No permits or special licenses are needed. The [CRPT website](#) has and will continue to post Covid protocols There are also warnings for any section that may need special attention, such as Lyman Falls Dam and Sumner Falls Rapid. We recommend that paddlers visit [American Whitewater](#) ahead of their travels to learn about safety precautions for paddling.
2. I would like to get a copy of the recording to share with my outdoor education teaching on watersheds. Thanks.
  - ◆ A recording of the presentation will be posted within 24 hours on [CRC's YouTube channel](#) and at [ctriver.org/LiveStream](#), where you can also find the full schedule of upcoming episodes and view recordings of all our past presentations. If you would like a pdf copy of the slide presentation, please contact Stacey: [slennard@ctriver.org](mailto:slennard@ctriver.org).
3. Campsite Registrations:
  - ◆ If you get there, and the tent stand(s) are full, can you set up on the ground in the area? If someone short stops your reservation?
    - Some of the campsites have a maximum number of people per site so please check those use limits before you visit a site. In the event that you arrive at a site and the platforms are full but there is space available to set up a tent and the maximum number hasn't been reached, you can pitch a tent.
  - ◆ The CT state sites were by reservations. Is that changing?
    - All the State Park sites in CT will continue to need a reservation. The fee is currently \$5/night. Here is a link to the sites and reservation information: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/State-Parks/Camping/River-Camping-Information---CT-State-Parks-and-Forests>
  - ◆ How do we use the calendar to make a registration for a campsite? What happens if someone else is there?
    - The calendar is a place you can register and also you can see who is already registered. Note the calendar is not an official reservation system and not everyone registers their stay. The calendar can be found at <https://www.connecticutriverpaddlerstrail.org/crpt7/campsite-registration-calendar> Keep in mind that all campsites except for the CT State Park sites, are first-come-first-served.

- ◆ Do all campsites have the same amenities? Can you have a campfire at all of them?
  - Each campsite has a different layout and amenities based on the location and site steward. For a full list of campsite descriptions visit [connecticutpaddlerstrail.org](http://connecticutpaddlerstrail.org) or download the app.
- 4. We live on the river, what is the owner liability if we sponsor a campsite?
  - ◆ All states have a liability limit for any landowner who donates land to be used for recreational uses, such as a campsite, as long as no fee is charged. Many of the states in the CT River Watershed have "recreational use" statutes that protect landowners who host campsites or trails for free on their property. For any questions about this, please reach out to [ksykes@outdoors.org](mailto:ksykes@outdoors.org).
  - ◆ We are always looking to expand campsites and access points. If you have land along the trail or know of anywhere that may be a good spot, please reach out.
- 5. How is the trail funded?
  - ◆ The trail is overseen by a coalition of trail partners. Funding to support projects completed by these partners comes from business donations, individual paddler donations and grant support.
  - ◆ If you are interested in donating please visit <https://www.connecticutriverpaddlerstrail.org/crpt7/node/3056>
- 6. Could we get Cathy's gear list?
  - ◆ All of her gear is listed on her blog. Cathy's blog: <https://cathygmumford.wordpress.com/>
  - ◆ Do you have suggestions for rain gear? As with a lot of gear, this comes down to personal preference. What one person loves might not work for someone else. A good place to start if you're looking to get an idea of what people bring is <https://paddling.com/learn/rain-gear-for-paddlers>. There are a few outfitters along the trail that may be able to offer specific recommendations.
- 7. How do you monitor your distance? Are you skilled at estimating river mileage, or is GPS signal reliable to take advantage of tech?
  - ◆ A GPS signal should be reliable, but you should always have more than one means of navigation, including a map. One of your means of navigation should be our new CT River Paddlers Trail App if you have a smartphone. It will give you location information and distance to the next campsite or access location. It also links with Google Maps for driving directions to the access points.
- 8. How long did the entire source to sea trip take?
  - ◆ A paddler can do it in two weeks, but if you have the time, a few extra days is even better. For Cathy it took 29 days, some days she paddled many miles, other days just a few.
- 9. Is there a way to connect with other paddlers to plan a trip or just ask questions or get advice?

- ◆ There is a message board on the [CRPT website](https://www.connecticutriverpaddlerstrail.org/crpt7/forum). Here's the forum on the CRPT website. <https://www.connecticutriverpaddlerstrail.org/crpt7/forum> . Additionally we suggest joining local outing clubs who run day trips for kayaking such as New Haven Hiking Club and Meshomasic Hiking Club that have websites. NHHC has a kayak trip (sometimes on CT River & LI Sound) every Thursday in warm weather. Meshomasic often has kayak trips on Fridays. The Appalachian Mountain Club has active Western MA, NH and CT chapters that have paddling committees. There are also numerous facebook groups for paddlers in the northeast.
- ◆ <https://www.amc-wma.org/paddling> - AMC Western Mass Chapter Paddling Committee
- ◆ <https://ct-amc.org/paddle/> - AMC CT Chapter Paddling Committee  
<https://ct-amc.org/paddle/>

10. How do I download the app?

- ◆ [Download the free app](#), Guthook Guides, from the app store or by visiting [atlasguides.com](https://atlasguides.com).
- ◆ Search for Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail, or browse the other long distance trails!
- ◆ Create account and purchase the CRPT Guide for \$9.99.
- ◆ You have to download the free Guthook Guides app and then purchase the CRPT guide from within the Guthook Guides app

11. How do National Blueways differ from National Water trails?

- ◆ The National Water Trails System is a network of water trails open to the public to explore and enjoy. The system also serves as a community of water resource managers that benefit from information sharing and collaboration. National Water Trails are a sub-set of the National Recreation Trails Program. National Water Trails have been established to protect and restore America's rivers, shorelines, and waterways; conserve natural areas along waterways; and increase access to outdoor recreation on shorelines and waterways. The Trails are a distinctive national network of exemplary water trails that are cooperatively supported and sustained.
- ◆ The new National Blueways System is part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to establish a community-driven conservation and recreation agenda for the 21st century. The Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture both identified the Connecticut River as an important priority under America's Great Outdoors.

12. How do you deal with bad weather on the trail?

- ◆ When you are out for an extended paddle sometimes you have bad weather days. This is when it's important to have alternate plans or have the correct gear to safely paddle on. For Tim, only a severe thunderstorm influences his paddling. He said "Seek shelter in that case until it passes, which we did. Rain is rain, and you have to expect it. Another suggestion, and not everyone can do this, is to leave yourself an extra day if you can, just in case you need a layover." Cathay added "All of the above advice is perfect. Paddling in the rain is not so bad, it is the muddy break down and set up that makes rainy days difficult."

13. Is it possible to portage around all rapids and dams?
- ◆ All rapids on the CT River Paddlers' Trail have portages associated with them. To find the full list of portages visit the [CRPT website portage descriptions page](#) or [download the smartphone app](#). Cathy says "I had no trouble portaging around Class II+ and above rapids in 2019"
  - ◆ Call First Light to get information about the shuttle from the Barton's Cove campground around the Turners Falls Dam in Turners Falls, MA.  
<https://www.firstlightpower.com/tag/recreation/>
  - ◆ Visit  
<https://www.hged.com/community-environment/recreation/canoe-portage.aspx> for information about the canoe portage information around the dam in Holyoke, MA.
  - ◆ This site has a list of releases scheduled for various dams:  
<http://h2oline.com/default.aspx?pg=p2>
  - ◆ Note: Due to covid restrictions some portage shuttles are not open. Be sure to call ahead or be ready to wait for a ride.
14. If you see a lot of trash, or something you can't move yourself, is there a function to pinpoint ?
- ◆ Thank you for taking care of the river. For any smaller items we hope people can take them off the river when they leave. For larger items you can report large trash sites here:  
<https://www.ctriver.org/our-work/source-to-sea-cleanup/report-trash/>
15. I'm planning a thru paddle. Is there long term parking available at Long Island Sound?
- ◆ I (Tim Lewis) would say not to my knowledge, but I have been able to find long term parking at hotels/campgrounds/businesses who are in the area of many places where I have done trips. Sometimes, when you explain what you are doing, they are more than willing to cooperate and offer you a secure location to leave your vehicle.
  - ◆ In the app you will find that each parking location/boat launch describes whether there is overnight parking nearby. We will be adding this information to the CRPT website as well.
16. Is there a Bed and Breakfast guide to paddling the River?
- ◆ There is not a Bed and Breakfast specific guide to paddling the river. Its something the CRPT executive committee is thinking about as we expand the capacity of the trail.
  - ◆ "I don't have an answer but that sounds like a lovely trip! I have found that hotels and Innkeepers are willing to accommodate my boat with a little advance notice."  
- Cathy
17. Best stretches to paddle in summer Low water levels (or areas to avoid in low water)?
- ◆ With depths ranging from 2 ft to 131 ft, the CT River varies throughout its 410 miles. That being said, even in drought conditions paddlers in human power crafts (kayaks, canoes, paddleboards) will often be able to find deep enough areas to navigate through. During low water levels paddlers should be aware that some debris and rocks that are normally well underwater may emerge and become obstacles.

18. Can you talk about pros and cons of doing a through paddle in a canoe vs kayaks?

- ◆ Canoe or Kayak, just personal preference. I like my kayak because it is tough, small and lightweight. - Cathy
- ◆ Tim pointed out that the advantage of a canoe is that you can carry more gear easily. He has taken both and he said it was a bit more of a puzzle to pack his gear into his kayak. The opposite of that being that the canoes can be heavier to carry around portages. Its all about personal preference and group size but as long as it doesn't leak it should get you from source to sea.

19. Cathy, did you feel safe camping by yourself?

- ◆ Sometimes I get nervous, but not so much at official Campsites or Campgrounds. I always prefer River Access only Sites. Camping near people concerns me more than camping in the woods. - Cathy