

Welcome to the Quaboag River Blue Trail!

This Map/Guide is designed to familiarize visitors and local residents with some of this river segment's interesting but less well known natural and historical features and recreational opportunities.

The C4Rivers Quaboag Blue Trail is a community partnership working to strengthen river stewardship and community vitality throughout the South Central Massachusetts Region and the Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed.

The Upper Quaboag Blue Trail offers a smooth water paddle through a scenic and wildlife rich area. Much of the bordering lands are part of a wildlife management area managed by MA F&W. Marshland and floodplain are the dominant landscape features. The trail covers a segment length of approximately 10 miles with 5-6 access points. Within this 10-mile stretch from Quaboag Pond to Warren, a paddler can witness one of the most impressive natural areas in the entire Commonwealth.

The Quaboag: (facts)

Beginning as tributaries in Spencer and North Brookfield, which flow into Quaboag Pond, the Quaboag River officially begins as the pond's outflow. It flows westerly for 25 miles to Three Rivers in Palmer where it helps create the main stem Chicopee River upon meeting the Ware and Swift rivers.

Named from an Algonquian term meaning "beyond the pond", likely referring to Quaboag Pond, the Quaboag River was a central focus for the Quaboag Indians; one of the three local tribes of Central Massachusetts.

The modern highlight of this section of the Quaboag

River is the Quaboag Wildlife Management Area (WMA), one of the largest marsh systems in all of Massachusetts and considered the most important site in all of southern New England for the American bittern. Long's Bulrush is a rare, robust sedge found in places along the trail. Over three contiguous miles of this deep marsh habitat lines the Quaboag, and an early morning paddle south from Route 148 during May and June will often have the still air reverberating with the booming calls of bitterns that have become quite rare elsewhere in the state. Although the size

of the habitat is here is important, what really makes the marshes of Quaboag WMA special is their quality. The plant community here is a diverse mix of cattails, sedges and even bog elements, while the periphery of the marsh is still a wild interface with surrounding forests. Studies have shown an inverse relation between the presence of marshbirds to the presence of development around a marsh, and it is no surprise that the Quaboag still supports impressive numbers of American bitterns, along with other rare species of marshbirds, while so many other marshes in central and eastern Massachusetts have lost their marshbirds to the disturbance, pollution and general degradation brought on by marsh-side sprawl. (MassDF&W)

River Etiquette:

The upper Quaboag River flows relatively smoothly between between Quaboag Pond and Lucy Stone Park in Warren throughout the paddling season. One section might get shallow at low flows (<45 cfs). Also, paddlers should always be on the lookout for downed trees, rocks and other obstacles that can pose hazards. Enjoy your trip and be respectful of other paddlers. Please respect private property and avoid trespassing and littering at all times.

Enjoy wildlife quietly and from a safe distance.

Wearing a life jacket is recommended--and required October through May.

Flow Gage info:



About C4RWC:

The Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed Council's mission is to "Promote stewardship, conservation, enjoyment, and restoration of the rivers, ecosystems and wildlife habitats of the Chicopee-4 Rivers basin, while balancing and fostering river friendly city & town economies and community life. C4RWC is focused on providing volunteer water monitoring, as well as recreational and educational activities for watershed residents. C4RWC works



collaboratively with towns, government agencies and community members to provide effective long-term watershed protection solutions. We welcome your help and support. www.chicopeewatershed.org
The 4 Rivers are: Chicopee, Ware, Swift, and Quaboag.



POINT OF INTEREST

- 1 The Seven Mile River offers paddling at adequate flows. Access is possible at Rt 9 and near the Spencer Fair Grounds. Adequate flows are generally over ___cfs as measured at the SevenMile USGS flow gage.
- 2 EB access on Stevens Rd off Cottage st (off Rt 9). River here to Quaboag Pond can be shallow at low flows. In low water it may be best to paddle up from Quaboag Pond and explore. Be prepared for beaver dams, too.
- 3 Quaboag Pond access is on Shore Rd at the state boat ramp.
- 4 Explore the channel that leads to "South Pond" where bricks were once made and from where "Brick Barges" steamed.
- 5 There were a number of Native American encampments around Quaboag Pond and even a burial ground at the northern tip.
- 6 Notice a small side channel cut into the left bank? This may have been a short cut channel cut from when barges brought bricks from the Quacumquasit Pond area to the Brookfield train depot.
- 7 There were a number of Native American encampments in the Quaboag Pond area and along this stretch of river.
- 8 Rt 148 State boat launch & White's Landing access: this site has been a river crossing since the early 1700's, was once known as the "fording" place.
- 9 The area beyond Quaboag Pond and Rt 148 is the Quaboag WMA section, great for birding and quiet exploration.
- 10 As you approach W Brookfield, paddlers will see an odd structure in the river, this may have served to deliver water to trains at the nearby station.
- 11 The Long Hill Rd bridge area was the site of a steamboat dock where partiers could go for an excursion upstream. A condensed milk plant was also situated near the south bank.
- 12 Rt 67 and 9 access, off of Rt 67.
- 13 Near where the outlet from Lake Wikaboag meets the Quaboag River, there was believed to be an Native American encampment.
- 14 The river segment after the entrance of Sullivan Brook can be shallow at river flows under 45 cfs. Passable. But you may rub bottom.
- 15 Lucy Stone Park: Lucy Stone (born nearby) was a prominent American orator, abolitionist, and suffragist, and a vocal advocate and organizer promoting rights for women. In 1847, Stone became the first woman from Massachusetts to earn a college degree.
- 16 Final access to upper Quaboag Blue Trail. River below here is more white water like and not passable at low flows nor recommended unless you are a skilledpaddler and reconnoiter the river. C4RWC intends a separate map for this segment in the future.



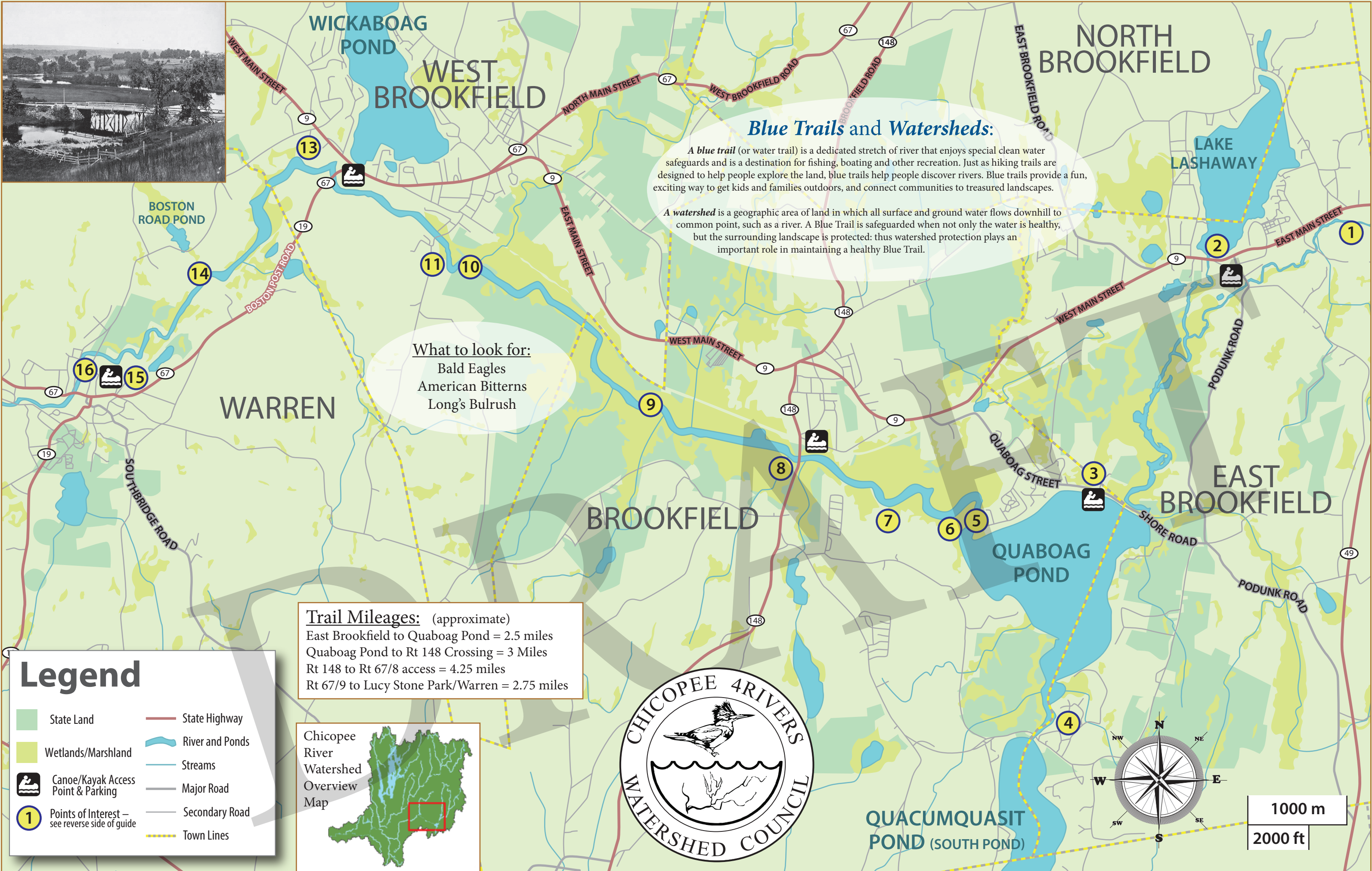
BLUE TRAIL

UPPER QUABOG RIVER TRAIL GUIDE

Chicopee-Ware-Quaboag-Swift

A guide to the natural, recreational and historical points of interest along the Quaboag River between Warren, Brookfield, West Brookfield, and East Brookfield.





Blue Trails and Watersheds:

A **blue trail** (or water trail) is a dedicated stretch of river that enjoys special clean water safeguards and is a destination for fishing, boating and other recreation. Just as hiking trails are designed to help people explore the land, blue trails help people discover rivers. Blue trails provide a fun, exciting way to get kids and families outdoors, and connect communities to treasured landscapes.

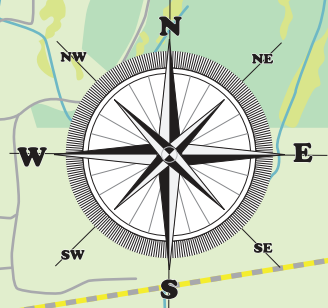
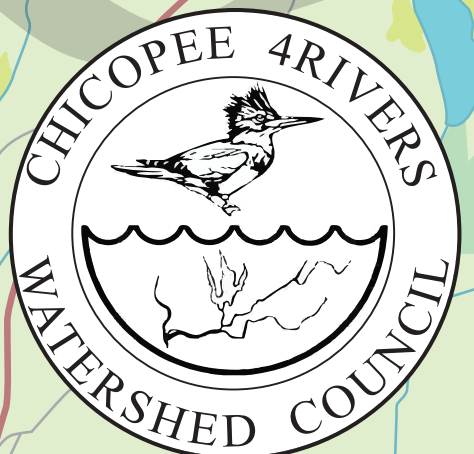
A **watershed** is a geographic area of land in which all surface and ground water flows downhill to common point, such as a river. A Blue Trail is safeguarded when not only the water is healthy, but the surrounding landscape is protected: thus watershed protection plays an important role in maintaining a healthy Blue Trail.

What to look for:
 Bald Eagles
 American Bitterns
 Long's Bulrush

Trail Mileages: (approximate)
 East Brookfield to Quaboag Pond = 2.5 miles
 Quaboag Pond to Rt 148 Crossing = 3 Miles
 Rt 148 to Rt 67/8 access = 4.25 miles
 Rt 67/9 to Lucy Stone Park/Warren = 2.75 miles

Legend

- State Land
- Wetlands/Marshland
- Canoe/Kayak Access Point & Parking
- 1 Points of Interest – see reverse side of guide
- State Highway
- River and Ponds
- Streams
- Major Road
- Secondary Road
- - - Town Lines



1000 m
 2000 ft