CONTOOCOOK RIVER PADDLE

CONTOOCOOK & CONCORD, NH

The Contoocook River is a tributary of the Merrimack River that flows northward from Lake Contoocook in Jaffrey, NH to Penacook, NH, where it empties into the Merrimack. This paddling route beginning in Contoocook Village (part of Hopkinton, NH) and ending in Concord is a favorite for experienced and novice paddlers alike. This is a one-way paddle using shuttle service available from Contoocook River Canoe Company (CRCC) for a fee of $12/boat. Alternatively, there is an out-and-back option for paddlers not wanting to use the shuttle service.

What you'll see: This paddle offers scenic views of protected **forests and farmland**, and plenty of great opportunities for watching wildlife. The shoreline is mostly forested with **sandy beaches** here and there, great for stopping for a picnic or a swim. If you enjoy fishing from your canoe or kayak, **smallmouth bass** and **pickerel** are common in this section of the Contoocook River. And don't forget to check out the beautiful **covered bridge** in the center of Contoocook Village right next to the launch point!

FIVE RIVERS CONSERVATION TRUST

- Five Rivers Conservation Trust has protected nearly 570 acres along this route in partnership with private landowners, including over 400 acres at **Bohanan Farm**, the home of **Contoocook Creamery**, and 55 acres of the Houston family's Pine Lane Farm fields in Contoocook Village.
- The Contoocook River is one of only a few rivers in New Hampshire that primarily flow in a northward direction. The truth is that rivers flow in just one direction always-- and that is DOWNHILL!

JAMIE ROBERTSON

Location: Contoocook Riverway Park (Contoocook Village) launch to **Contoocook River Canoe Company** (CRCC, Concord). Alternative out-and-back is from **Contoocook Riverway Park** along Contoocook River to confluence with **Blackwater River**, and back.

Length of Paddle: 9 miles total **** This is a ONE-WAY paddle**, and involves reserving a shuttle from CRCC (fee). Alternative out and back paddle 7.4 miles total.

Approximate time: 4-5 hours for either alternative

Difficulty: Flat water, but moderate difficulty due to length (one-way paddle) or paddling upstream (2nd half of out-and-back paddle).

What to bring: PFD/lifejacket, water, lunch, water shoes, sunscreen and hat (high sun exposure), binoculars (optional), swimsuit (optional), small dry bag (optional)

Be Aware: Recent precipitation and weather can impact water level and current velocity.

LOWELL PARKS & CONSERVATION TRUST

SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FORESTS
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MRWC
MERRIMACK RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

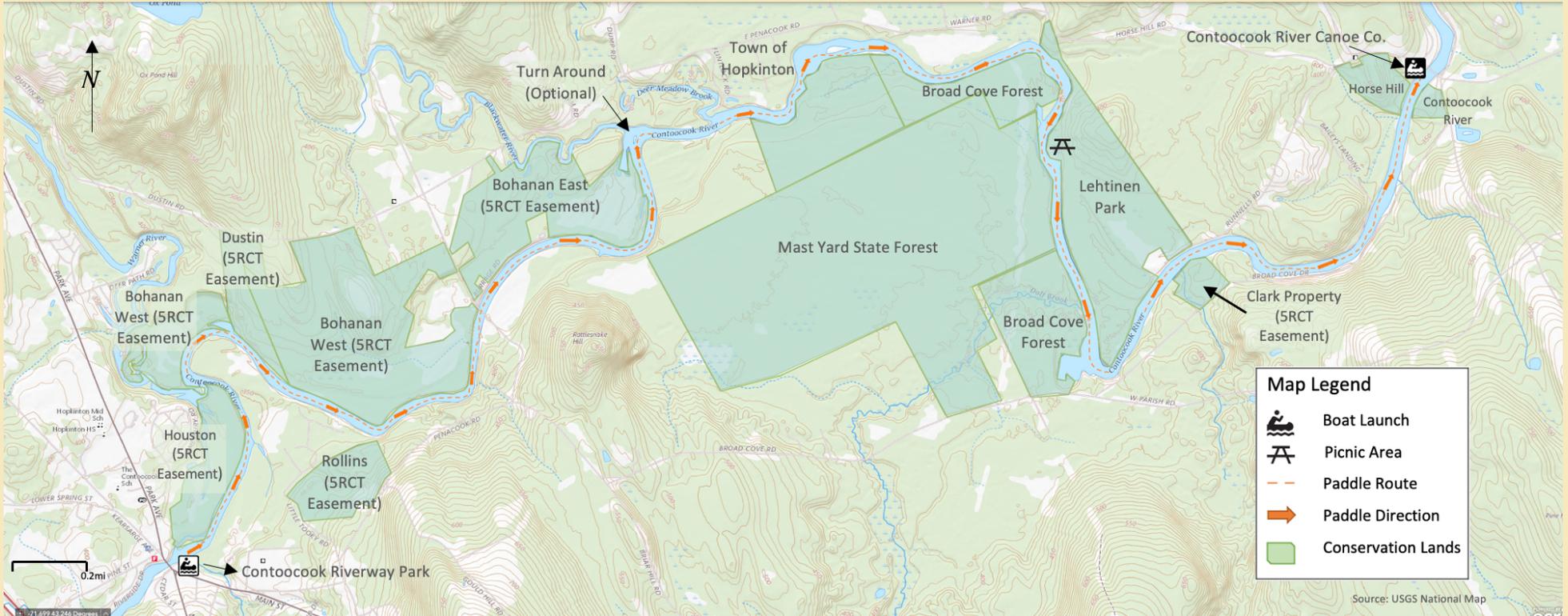FIVE RIVERS CONSERVATION TRUST

Getting There... Maps & Directions

Put In Location: Contoocook Riverway Park, Main Street, Contoocook, NH (behind Contoocook Railroad Museum)
GPS/Navigation App Coordinates: 43.22281, -71.71269 (can enter "Contoocook gazebo" in Google Maps)

Take Out Location: Contoocook River Canoe Company, 9 Horse Hill Road, Concord, NH **GPS/Navigation App Coordinates:** 43.25013, -71.62135

Merrimack
PADDLE CHALLENGE

Map Legend

🛶	Boat Launch
🪑	Picnic Area
– – –	Paddle Route
➜	Paddle Direction
🟩	Conservation Lands

Source: USGS National Map

Suggested Route

Tag your photos #merrimackpaddlechallenge to share your adventures!

- If you would like to rent kayaks or take advantage of a **shuttle option** (with rented or personal boats), **contact the Contoocook River Canoe Company**. For a fee, they will shuttle you and your boats to the launch point in Contoocook Village. **Shuttle reservations are required, call 603-753-9804.** More information at **www.contoocookcanoe.com**.
- If you choose to do the **out-and-back option**, start in Contoocook Village and launch at **Contoocook Riverway Park.** Paddle downstream along the Contoocook River for 3.7 miles until you reach the mouth of the Blackwater River on your left (this is the second sizeable river confluence, the first will be the **Warner River**, also on your left. Turn around at the confluence with the **Blackwater River** and paddle upstream back to the launch point.
- **Daisy Beach**, a small sandy beach at **Lehtinen Park** (~7 miles from launch point), makes a nice destination for a rest or picnic before the final stretch to CRCC for those choosing the one-way, shuttle option.