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Georgiaville to Greystone

Overview: Paddling the Woonasquattuck River from below Georgiaville Pond to Greystone Mill Pond is an interesting 2½ mile run for experienced paddlers. The river in this area is a mix of flatwater, quickwater and class I whitewater. The scenery ranges from dense forest to parks and playing fields to old mill buildings to suburban houses. There are a number of places where you can put in and take out. The longest trip involves putting in at the Georgiaville Town Beach boat ramp, portaging the dam and spillway and paddling down river to the south end of Greystone Mill Pond, portaging around Esmond dam on the way; but you can also put in or take out at Whipple Field and below the dam at Esmond Park.

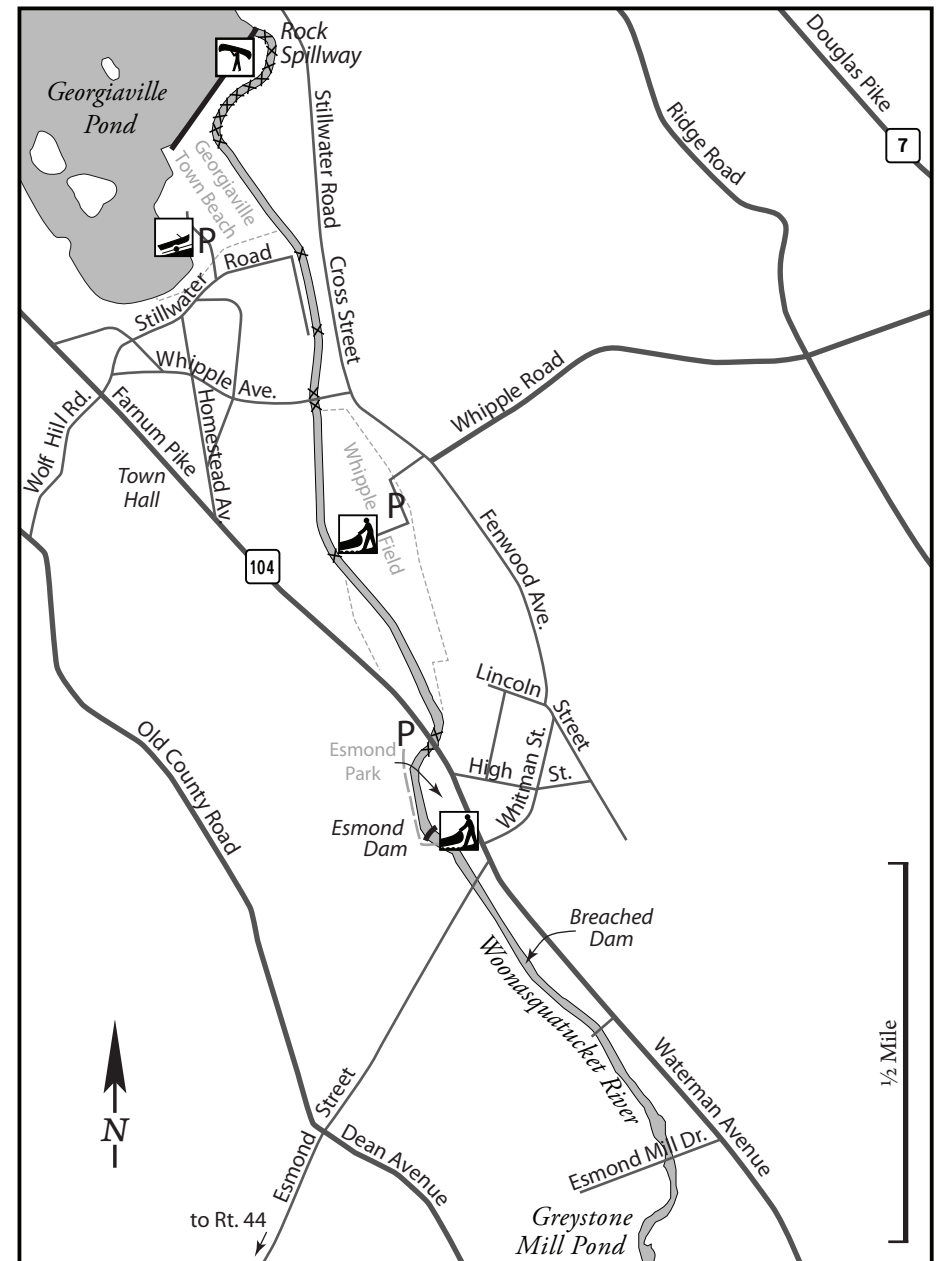
The river level is critical for this paddle. At 75 CFS on the USGS gauge at Centerdale* you will be hitting rocks fairly regularly and will have to get out and lift your boat over rocky areas occasionally. At 200 CFS the rapids will be getting washed out, the current will be swift but smoother than at lower water levels, and the dam at Esmond may even be runnable. However, at this river level you will also have less time to dodge obstacles, and “strainers” (trees down in the river that can trap and drown paddlers) can present a serious hazard. *Before paddling at any water level, stop at Esmond Park and decide how you plan to handle the low Esmond dam, just above the footbridge over the river.* When the river is high it can sometimes be run. At medium to lower water levels it will usually need to be portaged, which involves some bushwhacking. From Georgiaville Pond all the way to Greystone Mill Pond you should be ready for trees down across the river.

Getting There: For directions to Georgiaville Pond see paddle #3. For directions to Greystone Mill Pond see paddle #5. Esmond Park and Whipple Field may be found using the map at right. The parking area for Esmond Park is ¼ mile north of the junction of Esmond Street and Farnum Pike.

What’s There: Starting from the Georgiaville Pond boat ramp, paddle north and east until you reach the small landing near the spillway. Take out here and carry your boat up the steps to the top of the dam and the look to the right for the trail leading down to the river below the unrunable spillway. Watch out for poison ivy. Below the spillway there is about 500 feet of class I whitewater. After a sharp bend in the river, the current slows down a bit. From here to Esmond the river alternates between slower reaches and short riffles or rapids.

The low bank at Whipple Field, 0.6 miles below Georgiaville Pond, offers the first good take-out. At 0.9 miles you will see a marsh opening up on your left. This is a sign that the Esmond Dam and Esmond Park are just around the corner. At most river levels this dam must be portaged, which is sometimes difficult due to the lack of a good takeout above the dam.

* The USGS river gauge data from the Centerdale station are available on-line on a near real-time basis at: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ri/nwis/uv?01114500>



From the Esmond Dam it is about 0.2 miles to the remnants of a low, breached dam in front of the Benny’s buildings. If the river is high this area can be run. At lower levels you will likely have to stop and lift your boat over the rocks. Once past this dam a short section of quickwater takes you the head of Greystone Mill Pond. The take-out is 0.7 miles ahead at the south end of the pond. For more on Greystone Mill Pond see paddle #5.