

No. 2 - Gardiner's Landing

Type 6 Conservation Site – Connecticut River Estuary

Gardiner's Landing is on the western bank of the Connecticut River. This pocket park provides a place to view the shoreline at the mouth of the Connecticut River. The Connecticut River is the only principal river in the northeastern United States without a major port, harbor or urban area at its mouth. This is the result of shifting sandbars in Long Island Sound which impede navigation. This condition has served to preserve the largely rural character of the regional landscape and maintain the river's extraordinary assemblage of natural and relatively undisturbed biotic communities.

The lower Connecticut River, beginning near its mouth and continuing upstream for a distance of approximately 36 miles, contains one of the least developed large river tidal marsh systems in the entire United States, and the most pristine large-river tidal marsh system in the Northeast. There are no other areas in the Northeast that support such extensive or high quality fresh and brackish tidal wetland systems as do those in the Connecticut River estuary. These tidal river waters and marshes provide essential habitat, not only for several rare and endangered species including bald eagle, short-nose sturgeon, piping plover, and puritan tiger beetle. Waterfowl concentrations in this section of the river, especially those of the black duck, are among the highest and most significant in the region.

The wetlands and waters in the estuarine and tidal river complex of the lower river, with its extensive, high-quality tidal freshwater and brackish marshes and remarkable clustering of rare and endangered species, waterfowl, and anadromous fishes, are the focus of this area's International recognition. It is important to recognize this Internationally significant area as a single integrated complex comprised of many individual wetlands sites, and shallow water riverine habitats, all of which are inextricably linked by the tidal waters of the Connecticut River itself. There is a tremendous degree of ecological interaction and interdependence among its tidal waters, tidal wetlands, adjacent uplands, and species populations within an ecosystem or watershed framework. This concept of a single integrated ecological complex forms the basis of this international significance.

Location: Just east of the intersection of College Street and Bridge Street, behind the Dock and Dine Restaurant.

Recreational Resources: Public park, Fishing access,

Natural Resource: Views of Connecticut River & Great Island

Amenities: Parking, No restrooms