

Upper Connecticut River

Pittsburgh, New Hampshire

Mike Mathias September 2014

In the Great North Woods, in State of New Hampshire, about 15 miles south of the Canadian border lies one of the Northeast's finest fishing destinations. In and around the small Town of Pittsburg the mighty Connecticut River runs thru the landscape finding its way to Long Island Sound some 407 miles to the south.

My wife and I started going to Pittsburg about 11 years ago, at first for only a few days, then for a week and now for 2 weeks. We head north for the last 2 weeks of September just as the foliage begins to turn, and by the time we leave the mountains are alive with fall color. The landlock salmon are just returning to the river from the lakes which makes for an added bonus, along with the excellent fishing for rainbows, brookies and browns. Our first 3 years we stayed at The Glen and Lopstick Lodge, at the Glen meals and room are provided, where as at Lopstick accommodations consist of neat log cabins with a kitchen



4TH CONNECTICUT LAKE

where you do your own cooking. Since we bought our motor home we now stay at one of the only full service campgrounds up there called Mountainview, it is up a steep hill with magnificent views of the mountains. If you are looking for a true get away, this is the place to go as there is no, internet and T.V. reception unless you stay at one of the lodges and cell service is non-existent.

The Connecticut River begins about 750 feet from the Canadian border at 4th Connecticut Lake, which is a very small lake about 1.8 acres in area, that you can walk around in about 30 minutes or less. It is located at an elevation of 2670 feet above sea level, and has a very small outlet with a stream that finds its way .5 miles south to the 3rd Connecticut Lake. Right at the border crossing there is a narrow trail which climbs up to the lake and criss crosses the border as you go higher. As I recall we did the hike in about 1 1/2 hours, while following fresh moose tracks up the trail. We lunched near the lake before heading back to the road.

As you head south on route 3, less than 1 mile from the border along side the road is the location of the 100 foot (at its deepest) 231 acre 3rd Connecticut Lake. I have never fished there but brookies, rainbows and lakies are the fish of choice here. It appears to be an excellent spot to fish, relax, picnic and enjoy the scenery.

About 5 miles further downstream the 2nd Connecticut lake is located, as well as the 2nd Connecticut Dam which holds back this 1,102 acre body of water with its brook trout, landlocked salmon. The tail waters below the dam provide for excellent fishing for brookies, land locks and rainbows depending on the days water flow. We are talking about pocket water fishing with studded boots and a wading staff an absolute necessity. As the water flows toward 1st Lake, the river cuts it way thru a steep gorge with high rocky pools where fish will rest on their way upstream. We usually accessed this area by parking on the highway and following one of the many moose trails downhill, which seem to disappear into the woods and then by listening for the roar of the water in the gorge, make our way to the river. This is a place of solitude, surrounded by nature and only by the sound of river rushing to the 1st Connecticut lake. Sections of the river upstream of 1st ct Lake can also be reached from Magalloway Road which crosses the river on its way to Magalloway Mountain, the highest point in the area.



2ND CONNECTICUT DAM BROOK TROUT

Below Magalloway Road the river enters the 3,071 acre 1st Connecticut lake. Landlocked salmon and Brook Trout abound in this water, fished mostly by boat, trolling flies and lures behind with lead line etc. I have seen old pictures in some of the lodges of "sports" with daily catches of 10-20, 5



1ST CONNECTICUT DAM RAINBOW

to 10 pound brook trout and salmon on their stringers. Of course with kills like that in the past, you would be lucky to get one of those fish in a month of fishing today. But I digress. The outlet of 1st Lake is at the 1st Ct. Dam where the tail water fishery of the fly only catch and release section begins, and where most of the fishing pressure occurs. This section of the river toward Lake Francis consists of both stocked fish, many holdover fish as

well as some native fish and a decent run of Landlocked Salmon. Decent sized Rainbows, Brook Trout and Salmon are distributed along this stretch with an occasional Brown Trout also. Once again this stretch of river is mostly pocket water with occasional fast runs and pools. As the river approaches Lake Francis there are some steep rocky pools where the elevation rapidly drops as it enters the lake. In the fall this area is the staging place for the run of salmon up the river. Again Lake Francis is generally fished by boat.



MURPHY DAM BROWN

Near the town of Pittsburg, Lake Francis terminates at Murphy Dam another bottom release dam much like 2nd Ct. Dam and 1st Ct. Dam, allowing for cooler water temperatures all season. This section of the river below Pittsburg, is where most of the float boat guides fish with their clients on board. Brown trout of decent sizes can be caught in this section of the river along with Rainbows. Colebrook, New Hampshire seems to be the lowest section of river for the cold water fishery, but I'm sure there must be trout further downstream, as the river finds its way to Long Island Sound.

Just a note of caution, all dam water flows are controlled by Trans Canada Power Co, and are subject to flow changes in the river at their discretion, so care must be taken when wading the river. Always be aware of any changes in water velocity and water height and monitor water flows provided on the internet for the various area dams. Also due to the rocky river bed, studded boots



YOUNG MOOSE

are highly recommended as well as the use of a wading staff. In all the years I have been going fishing there only once has the water been nearly unfishable due to extreme water flow. You can almost always find some place to fish.

In addition to the river, there are numerous back woods ponds which all hold Brook trout and are almost always fishable. Coon Brook Bog, East Outlet, Moose Pond, Boundary Pond ETC, ETC.

If you are looking for a place to get away from the rat race, and you love to fish, I would suggest a visit to the Pittsburg area.

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