

# COLLINSVILLE CANOE & KAYAK

Bringing Recreation & Retail to the Farmington River



One of the largest retailers of canoes, kayaks and paddleboards in New England is in Collinsville, Connecticut – the hip, historic section of Canton. Avid outdoors enthusiasts Jon and Sue Warner first envisioned their business in northern New England.

Their friends refocused the Warners on Connecticut’s tremendous untapped need for canoes, kayaks and paddleboards.

The Warners found two lumber barns on the Farmington River, just across the street from the picturesque Collins Company mill. The location became a springboard to a wide variety of experiences on the river – something that couldn’t be found in a big box store.

Collinsville Canoe & Kayak encourages the public to learn about their products by trying them on the Farmington River. The store offers classes and orientation sessions so that shoppers know what they’re buying. The non-commissioned staff refrains from pushing the most expensive product. Their goal is to provide great service while connecting the public with the river.

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-Jon Warner, co-owner





“We want to fit each customer to the right product for their needs,” said Jon Warner. “Every time we do that and explain how to get the best use from that product, we build healthy relationships between the river, the customer and the business. That’s how Collinsville Canoe & Kayak has succeeded.”

The Warners’ commitment to serving their customers’ needs proved to be a winning strategy. Through the peak season, their store, parking lot and launch area buzz with activity. The original line of canoes and kayaks now includes newer items like stand-up paddleboards. Visitors to Collinsville often see paddleboard yoga classes on the river – sometimes with a bald eagle soaring overhead. And if people ask the staff at Collinsville Canoe & Kayak, they’ll share their knowledge of little-known spots for kayaking, fishing and more.

The Warners also give back to the community through their support of the Canton Food Bank and the Farmington River Watershed Association, which was instrumental in gaining a federal Wild and Scenic designation for the Farmington River. Collinsville Canoe & Kayak succeeds in the competitive Greater Hartford market by selling quality products and educating customers.

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