

DELAWARE RIVER WATER TRAIL



HOW TO USE THE GUIDE & MAPS

The Delaware River Water Trail Guide provides boaters with useful information to plan safe, environmentally friendly outings on the 200 miles of the non-tidal river from Hancock, New York to the Falls at Trenton, New Jersey. Recreational users such as anglers and more will also find the guide useful for planning trips on or along the river.

This guide coincides with the Delaware River Recreation Maps produced by the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC). The maps are excellent navigational aids that show approximately 5-10 mile stretches of river with detailed river conditions such as location of rapids and falls, channels, islands, bridges, public access points and the local road network. Also included is information about the level of paddling difficulty, and riverside facilities such as restrooms, parking, and picnic areas. The river recreation maps are available through the DRBC at www.state.nj.us/drbc/drbc.htm

Although the authors and publisher of this Delaware River Water Trail Guide have made a considerable effort to provide accurate information, they take no responsibility for any errors or omissions and disclaim any liability for accident, loss, injury, inconvenience or other damage that may be sustained by anyone using the information contained herein. Any outdoor recreation can be potentially hazardous, and river recreation is no exception. Weather and water conditions can change quickly, and it is up to each boater or other recreational user to learn the proper skills, assume responsibility for his/her own actions and safety, and exercise sound judgment. The ultimate responsibility for safety lies solely with the individual.

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WELCOME TO THE WATER TRAIL!

The Delaware River offers some of the finest and most accessible recreational opportunities in the northeastern United States. Popular activities include boating, fishing, swimming, camping, hunting, hiking, bird watching, sightseeing along state-designated scenic highways, and cycling along canal towpaths and bike routes.

It is no wonder that much of the Delaware River makes a great water trail. Non-profit environmental and recreational organizations, local residents and businesses, and federal, state and local governments have joined in a cooperative effort to guide and enhance river access opportunities through the development of a water trail system. This system includes uniform signage, maps, a trail guide and an interactive web site.

There are more than 150 designated water trails throughout the United States connecting people to water resources. Water trails are boat routes suitable for canoes, kayaks and small motorized watercraft. Like conventional trails, water trails are recreational corridors between specific locations. The Delaware River Water Trail will include guided access points and day use and/or camping sites for the boating public. It will provide one-stop trip planning information that considers the river as a whole system, where and how to navigate it safely and appropriately, and ways to help protect its resources.

There are a few tributary streams to the Delaware River that are already designated water trails. These include the 75-mile Lehigh River Water Trail and 142-mile Schuylkill River Water Trail. Information on these trails is available on the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission web site (www.fish.state.pa.us).



Delaware River Greenway Partnership (DRGP) is the manager and one of the sponsors of the Delaware River Water Trail project. The mission of the DRGP is to promote the public and private stewardship of a regional corridor of natural, historic, cultural, scenic and recreational resources along the Delaware River and its tributaries, and to acknowledge the integrity of the nationally recognized Delaware River system through a public/private partnership. To find out more about the water trail and join the DRGP, go to www.drgrp.org

Key Project Sponsors:

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Delaware River Basin Commission
National Park Service, Department of the Interior:
Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
American Canoe Association-Delaware Valley Division
Delaware River Greenway Partnership
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Special Thanks:

Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission
Lower Delaware National Wild and Scenic River
National Canoe Safety Patrol
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
New York Department of Environmental Conservation
Pennsylvania Environmental Education Center
Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers
Upper Delaware Council
Wildlands Conservancy

Design: Avayou Design

A TRAVELER'S WATERSIDE GUIDE TO THE WILD AND SCENIC DELAWARE RIVER FROM HANCOCK, NEW YORK TO TRENTON, NEW JERSEY



SHARING THE RIVER

The Delaware River attracts many different types of recreational users, including canoeists and kayakers, motor boaters, jet skiers, sight-seers, swimmers and tubers. It is important that all recreational users understand and abide by a few simple guidelines for on-the-water conduct.

The basic principles for river etiquette are:

- Know the boundaries of public and private lands. Respect public as well as private property – use "Leave No Trace" principles. "Leave No Trace" is a nationally recognized outdoor skills and ethics awareness program (www.int.org).
- Understand the river before setting out on an unfamiliar section. Follow state-specific boating regulations, and safety guidelines so as not to endanger other river users or yourself.
- Respect wildlife.
- Be courteous and respectful of other river users. Respect their SPACE, PRIVACY, and SOLITUDE while on the river, in camp, on hikes and at boat ramps. Respect anglers' water – boaters should look ahead for anglers, both on the shore and in the water, and give them a wide berth, passing by quietly.

Much of the Delaware River has a National Wild & Scenic Rivers designation. Almost all of the shoreline along the Upper and Lower sections of the Delaware River and many of the islands are privately owned, although not always posted as such. Please be considerate of the privacy and rights of landowners and do not enter private land unless you have prior permission from the property owner.

If you plan to camp overnight, plan ahead. Reservations may be necessary for both public and privately owned campgrounds. Courtesy is of utmost importance. Noise carries across the water much louder than on land.

"Take only pictures. Leave only footprints."

Always collect your trash before you depart from a stop, even biodegradable items such as apple cores and orange peels. Trash bags should always be part of your gear. Make it a habit to pick up an extra bit of litter on each river trip. Individual actions will lead to a cleaner river and shoreline.

BOATING AND FISHING REGULATIONS



- Reciprocal license agreements apply to interstate waters for boating and fishing.
- A valid fishing license is needed for the state where you intend to fish, when fishing from shore or wading off shore.
- Be sure to obtain specific boating and fishing regulations from the appropriate state agency sources.
- Valid boat and personal watercraft registration is required as in any waterway.

You can find out more about Pennsylvania requirements through the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. You can find out about New Jersey requirements through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks & Forestry and Division of Fish and Wildlife, and New Jersey Motor Vehicles Commission. You can find out more about New York requirements through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; through New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; and through New York State Department of Motor Vehicles.

THE DELAWARE RIVER



RIVER SAFETY

The Delaware River is a great place to relax and enjoy nature, but as with many outdoor activities there are inherent risks that can lead to injury or even death. River enthusiasts bear personal responsibility for their own safety. Always remember the ever-changing nature of the river. Pay close attention to weather conditions. Use common sense, caution, good planning and proper equipment to greatly reduce risks.

A wealth of information is available on river safety issues and techniques. One of the best ways to learn about safety and improve skills is to join a local paddling or boating club. Experienced boaters are eager to share their knowledge and demonstrate efficient, safety-minded techniques and skills. There are also some excellent books and videos available. The American Canoe Association offers paddling courses for all skill levels for both canoe and kayak, and the National Canoe Safety Patrol offers river safety and rescue courses. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary offers similar programs for motor boaters.

The following tips will help ensure safe and enjoyable river trips:

BE PREPARED-WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET

Never enter the river without wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) or lifejacket. Always carry some form of personal identification and notation of medical conditions and allergies. Always carry water and a first-aid kit, and an extra paddle if you are in a canoe or kayak. In cool weather, dress accordingly and bring at least a complete change of warm clothing in a waterproof bag. In warmer weather take along insect repellent and sun block. Plan your trip carefully and seek out the latest information on ever changing river conditions. Let someone know what your plans are and when you expect to be finished. Always wear protective footwear. Watch for broken glass underfoot, particularly near accesses.

CONSIDER YOUR SKILL LEVEL

The Delaware River's flat water stretches are perfect for beginners. Class I & II rapids are appropriate for more experienced paddlers. Class II stretches of this river are often considered "technical," which refers to the degree of boat-handling skill required to navigate rocks and boulders in swiftly moving current. Be aware that class designations are relative to changes in water levels. Make sure your paddling adventures are in sync with your skill level.

IN AN EMERGENCY

Save People First! Equipment can be salvaged later. Even a swamped boat will float. Stay with it. Try to keep hold of your paddles if you are in a canoe or kayak. Hold on to the upstream end of the boat to avoid getting caught between the boat and a rock. Float on your back, with your feet pointing downstream near the surface to avoid foot entrapment in the rocks. Swim over to the riverbank. If possible, retrieve your boat in safe, calm water. Never stand up in the mainstream or current. In the event of an emergency, call 911 or local authorities.

SWIMMING AND WADING

Hot summer days invite river users to cool off. Be aware that most drownings on the river have been swimming-related. Always keep your PFD or lifejacket on. Swift currents, sudden drop-offs, and slippery rocks can cause unexpected and serious injuries. Don't wade in water above your knees in a strong current. You can be knocked over or your foot could be caught between rocks. If you're swimming in a current, keep your feet downstream and elevated toward the surface. Then you can see what's ahead of you and can use your feet to ward off some of the rocks.

TRAVEL SMART

Don't travel alone. Let someone know your trip plans.

RIVER HAZARDS

COLD

Even during June and September, when the weather seems mild, hypothermia can be a problem for the unprepared river traveler. Wear synthetic fleece or wool, or special gear (i.e., wet suits or dry suits) for thermal protection. At the very least, bring along a complete change of clothing in a dry-bag or double-bag your clothes with black plastic trash bags. Tie gear securely to the boat.

STRAINERS

Strainers are fallen trees or debris piles that block all or a portion of the river. Like a kitchen strainer, a river strainer lets water through, but not you or your boat. Avoid strainers at all costs!

Strainers commonly occur along the banks of the river where one or more trees have fallen into the water but they may be found anywhere along the river. In some cases a strainer will block the entire channel. Be alert for strainers, especially where the river narrows, and around sharp bends where strainers may loom with little time to react.



A special kind of strainer called an Eel Weir can be found in the Upper Delaware. These are V-shaped rock walls in the channels, pointing downstream. Besides catching eels they can also trap and swamp your boat. Watch for the posted signs and avoid them.

If you do get caught by a strainer, keep calm. Lean to the downstream side, even though that means leaning towards the tree or obstacle. If in a canoe, make sure you coordinate your moves with each other. Don't try to swim – you could be crushed under the canoe.

BRIDGES

Bridge piers are common collecting points for strainers. Because of the strong current, avoid the piers themselves and give the surrounding area a wide berth, as parts of the piers may extend far under the water. Anticipate your approach from a far distance to stay clear of the piers.

UPPER DELAWARE RIVER

The Upper Delaware is a mountain river known for its trout fishing waters, stunning scenery, and whitewater paddling. It is one of the most popular paddling destinations in the northeastern United States. River travelers are treated to views of dramatic cliffs and rock formations such as Hawks Nest and Elephant Rocks. On any given day, one can expect to see bald eagles, osprey, and even the occasional deer. Bear sightings are extremely rare.

Much of the Upper Delaware is part of the Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River (Upper Delaware S&RR), a unit of the National Park System. The Upper Delaware S&RR includes 73 miles of the river along the New York-Pennsylvania border, from Hancock, New York to Sparrowsburg, New York. Despite the federal designation, most of the land along the river is privately owned. More than a dozen public access points and nearly as many private accesses provide ample opportunity for canoeing, kayaking, rafting, tubing, and fishing. Canoes, kayaks and tubes are the most popular form of recreation. Water craft are available to rent from many commercial outfitters. The Upper Delaware S&RR prohibits personal water craft (e.g., jet-skis) on the river within its boundaries. Note: Jet skis are permitted between the Upper Delaware and Delaware Water Gap and are launched from the West End beach in Port Jervis.

Along your journey, you will discover outstanding historic places and structures, including remnants of a once-busy canal and the Delaware Aqueduct, the nation's oldest existing wire cable suspension bridge. From the river, you will see the Delaware Aqueduct as you pass by the Village of Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania, which also features the Zane Grey Museum, once home of the most famous novelist of the American West. The Lackawaxen River, largest tributary to the Upper Delaware River, joins at the upstream end of the village. Those traveling by car on Route 97, which parallels the river, are treated to spectacular views of the river at Hawks Nest.



Although the Upper Delaware is known for its whitewater and draws heavy traffic during warm weather months, the first 30 miles below Hancock feature a series of shallow riffles and pools. Upstream reservoir releases produce cold water temperatures, even in the middle of summer.

There are several major rapids, including Skinners Falls, located 5 miles above Narrowsburg, New York. It is perhaps the most famous along the entire length of the Delaware, although not necessarily the most difficult to navigate. Nevertheless, paddlers should scout this and other rapids from shore before attempting passage. Beginners can also consider carrying their boats around Skinners Falls. From Narrowsburg to Port Jervis and Matamoras there are also numerous rapids or rifts including Ten Mile, Shohola, and Mongaup, to name a few. The Shohola Rift and Mongaup Falls are perhaps the most challenging to safely navigate, requiring paddling skills and river reading experience.

The Upper Delaware may be known as a whitewater destination but there are several long stretches of quiet pools known as eddies. Long Eddy, Quicks Eddy, Handsome Eddy and Pond Eddy are all deep, slow moving stretches of the river.

Recreational users can call the National Park Service's River Conditions Information Line at 845-252-7100 to hear reports of temperatures, river height, and safety conditions. The information is updated daily during the paddling season. For more information visit www.nps.gov/upde.

LEGEND

- Bicycle Trail
- Boat Launch
- Campground
- Canoe Launch
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Museum
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Point of Interest
- Swimming
- Telephone
- Visitor Information
- Public Park Land
- Roads

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MIDDLE

DELAWARE RIVER

The Middle Delaware River is for those recreational users who wish to enjoy a more solitary river experience in a relatively untamed setting. It stands apart from the upper and lower sections, because most of this stretch of river and the land around it is part of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DWNRA). It is managed by the National Park Service.

The character of the river changes as it turns sharply just south of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River at Matamoras, Pennsylvania and Port Jervis, New York. The river leaves the Appalachian Plateau and enters the Ridge and Valley geophysical province. The whitewater of the upper sections is also left behind as the river becomes wider and slower. US Route 209 parallels the river on the Pennsylvania side, while Old Mine Road, one of North America's oldest continually used roads, follows the river on the New Jersey side.

One of the more secured and scenic stretches in the middle of DWNRA is Walpack Bend, a long "S" turn in the river that begins where the Bushkill Creek enters on the Pennsylvania side, and ends just below the Big Flatbrook on the New Jersey side.

Below Walpack Bend, the river separates the Kittatinny ridgeline in New Jersey and the Blue Mountain in Pennsylvania, forming the Delaware Water Gap. When the wind is blowing from the southwest, as it often does, this stretch of river requires vigorous paddling to make any headway. The Appalachian Trail also crosses the river at the Water Gap.

This section of river makes it ideal for beginners to develop paddling and river reading skills. The Middle Delaware features long pools and brief stretches of shallow riffles with only a few notable rapids. Paddlers of all skill levels appreciate the Middle Delaware's peaceful beauty. Many primitive campsites dot both sides of the river and many of its islands, offering overnight stays. There is little power boating, enhancing the solitude. Water quality is excellent for fishing and swimming. The Middle Delaware is the only one of the 3 river sections that offers swimming beaches with lifeguards.

Before reaching the southern end of the Middle Delaware, river travelers will notice Worthington State Forest on the New Jersey side and Shawnee-on-Delaware on the Pennsylvania side. Shawnee-on-Delaware is a reminder that the Delaware Water Gap continues to be one of the most popular resort destinations in the northeastern United States. The last access for the Delaware Water Gap NRA is at Kittatinny Point Visitor Center.



LOWER

DELAWARE RIVER

The lower non-tidal Delaware River is the longest and most populated of the three sections, stretching nearly 76 miles from just below the Delaware Water Gap to the tidal waters at Trenton, New Jersey and Morrisville, Pennsylvania.

Most of the land abutting the Lower Delaware is private property. Please respect private property and refrain from accessing it. Boating and fishing is managed by the New Jersey Marine Police and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

The cultural landscape encompasses a rich tapestry of historic towns and small cities, canals, bridges, factories and farms. There are plenty of opportunities for dining, lodging, and shopping near the river on the Pennsylvania and New Jersey sides. Scenic vistas of rocky bluffs, forested islands, and river banks steeped in history greet recreational users.

Recreational use on the Lower Delaware can be heavy during the summer, especially use by tubers. This section of the river is more densely populated than the Upper and Middle sections, and there are many river access points. Unlike the Middle and Upper sections, the majority of river users are people who live along or near the river.

The Lower Delaware is a popular destination for motorboats of all types. Personal water craft (jet-ski) use is allowed, and its use is extensive. Paddlers need to be aware of other boaters and use caution when running a section of the river that is heavily used by power boaters. These areas tend to be limited to deeper sections of the river that have improved accesses, such as Lambertville, Bulls Island, Upper Black Eddy, and Anters Eddy. Those who desire a tranquil trip through these areas should consider getting out on the water as early as possible on summer weekends, or paddle on weekdays or off-season.

Geologic and scenic vistas include the glorious red shale Nockamixon Cliffs and Milford Bluffs. Significant man-made features include the Delaware & Raritan Canal, Delaware Canal, and Roebeling Bridge in Riegelsville. There are other signs of industrial civilization such as quarries, cement and chemical factories, and power generating stations.

Paddling conditions vary greatly, as the Lower Delaware cuts through three physiographic regions - the Great Valley, Highlands, and Piedmont. There are many areas of slow current like the 2-mile-long Upper Black Eddy, but there are also long stretches of gently moving water and riffles, and a few rapids that rival those found in the Upper Delaware, at least in terms of notoriety. Beginners would be wise to avoid these areas unless guided by experienced paddlers.

The water trail ends at the Falls of Trenton, where the river makes its final tumble before meeting the tidal waters entering Delaware Bay.

The Delaware River stands out as one of the most remarkable rivers in the nation: so rich in recreational, scenic, historic and natural resources that three quarters of the non-tidal river (about 150 miles) is included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Although the river only covers about 0.4 percent of the United States as it journeys from the mountains to the Delaware Bay, it supplies drinking water for about 7% of the nation's population—including the cities of New York and Philadelphia.

THE DELAWARE



THE DELAWARE WILD AND SCENIC WONDER

The Delaware River is a boundary water, separating New York and Pennsylvania in the upper stretch, New Jersey and Pennsylvania in the middle and lower stretches, and Delaware and New Jersey in the Delaware Bay. It begins as two streams, the East and West branches, which flow down the western slopes of the Catskill Mountains and meet just below Hancock, New York. From here the river takes several sharp bends as it heads south for some 326 miles to reach the Atlantic Ocean.

The Delaware River corridor is the home to diverse populations of wildlife, unique natural areas and scenic vistas, mountain forests, wetlands, fertile farms, historic events, towns and structures of national importance, exciting whitewater and calm, deep pools, world famous trout fishing, and so much more.

An important quality of the river is its free-flowing nature as the largest un-dammed river in the eastern United States. The excellent water quality and diversity of plant and animal life is found the entire length of the non-tidal river. These assets are directly attributed to the preservation of the Delaware's natural flow of riffles, rapids, pools, and eddies. Freedom from dams and superior water quality has allowed species of fish like the American shad, striped bass, and American eel to continue their ancient migrations up and down the river to and from their spawning grounds. In addition, the Delaware River is one of the four major migration flyways in North America for waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, and neo-tropical songbirds. Many mammal species also flourish in the river and surrounding environs, including beaver, otter, mink, and muskrat, as well as black bear, red fox, and white-tailed deer.

As in other river systems, the Delaware has a family of creeks and rivers that contribute to its flow. The Beaver Kill and Lackawaxen River are famous trout fishing tributaries to the Upper Delaware River, with the Flat Brook, Bushkill and Broadhead creeks joining the Middle Delaware. The Lower Delaware is fed by the Lehigh River, which is the second largest of all the Delaware tributaries and a water trail in its own right.



A CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

A day on the Delaware River is truly a journey through geological time and human history. The landscape shows evidence of the interrelationship of people and place. It crosses five topographic regions. A wide variety of geological structures can be found within these regions and river travelers can observe these in the different rock formations. Stone walls, farmhouses, bridge piers, and other structures reveal the local geology through the materials used in their construction.

The Appalachian Plateau, containing the river's headwaters, and the Ridge and Valley Province are part of the Upper Delaware. This is a hilly landscape, dominated by rocky rapids. Remains of a canal and the oldest existing wire suspension bridge in the nation reveal attempts to get around natural obstacles to trade and settlement.

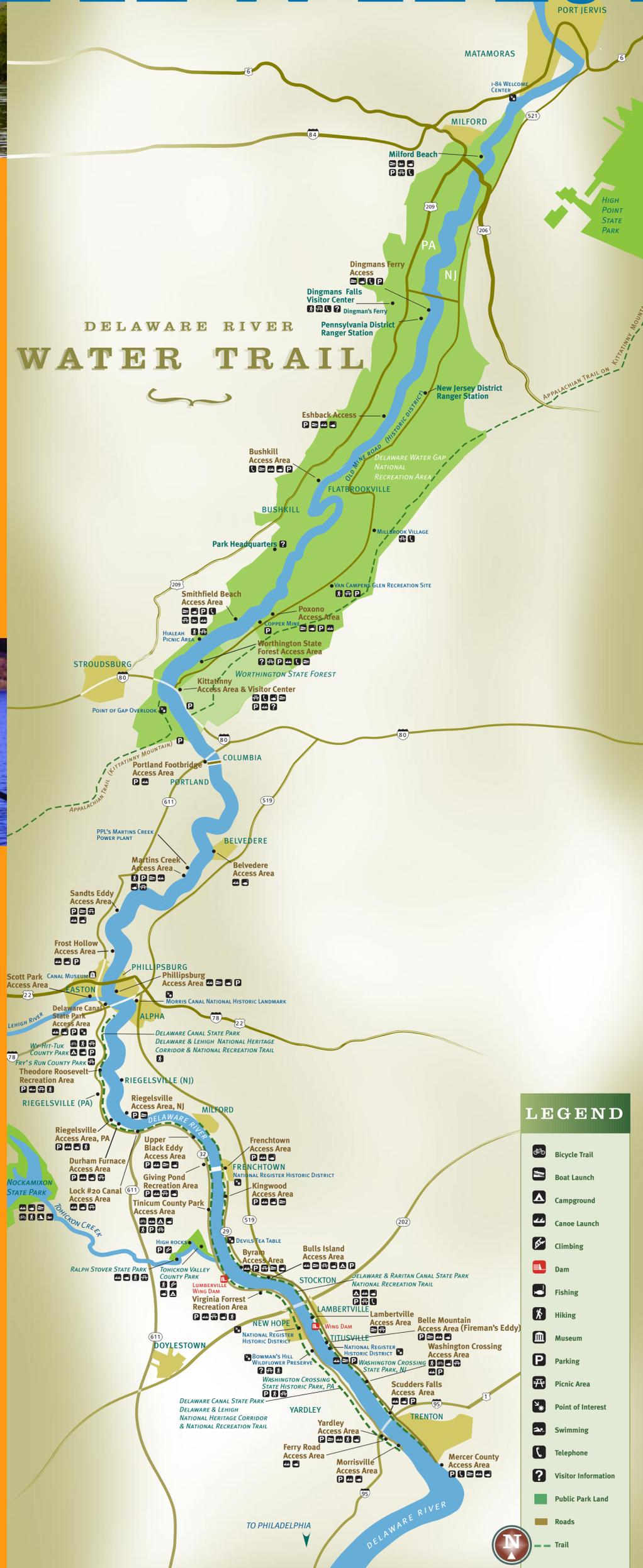
The Middle Delaware includes part of the Ridge and Valley Province and Reading Prong (also known as the Highlands). Its most distinctive feature is the tight "S" curve through Kittatinny Ridge—the Delaware Water Gap. The spectacular views from the hills and the cool mountain air attracted people to the area in the 19th century.

Further downriver, the Lower Delaware includes the Piedmont, and the Coastal Plain surrounding the Delaware Bay. The gently rolling hills and fertile soils of the Piedmont led to early settlement and continued development, in river towns such as Trenton, New Jersey and New Hope, Pennsylvania. Milford Bluffs is a distinct geologic formation, with a red color due to high iron content.

A temperate climate and bountiful supply of water, wildlife, timber, minerals, and fertile soils have attracted humans dating back 12,000 years when Paleo-Indians first camped along the Delaware. The Leni Lenape built permanent villages along the Delaware River and many of its tributary streams and lakes. The Lenape paddled dugout canoes on the river a thousand years before European colonists appeared.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Delaware River was the political, revolutionary, agricultural, and industrial center of the United States. The river and its canal systems were used to transport enormous quantities of lumber, anthracite coal, iron, and agricultural goods to New York and Philadelphia. A critical event in American history, "Washington Crossing the Delaware," is surely the nation's most famous image of a river crossing.

Today, the Delaware River is best known as a destination for its outdoor recreation, including canoes, kayaks, whitewater rafting, power boating, fishing, photography, tubing, nature and wildlife viewing, sightseeing and more. There are more than twenty commercial liveries and dozens of fishing guide services. River recreation is an important part of the local economy. In the Upper Delaware most of the commercial liveries operate due to their proximity to the popular whitewater sections of the river. Further south, the Delaware and Lehigh National and State Heritage Corridor, Delaware Canal State Park, and Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park are visited by more than two million people annually.



LEAVE NO TRACE Enhance your experience of the river and respect its resources through use of "Leave No Trace" principles for outdoor recreation. For more information, visit www.lnt.org.

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you will visit
- Prepare for weather, hazards and emergencies
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use

CAMP AND RECREATE ON DURABLE SURFACES

- Use existing sites that won't be damaged by your stay
- Avoid long stays at one site
- Keep groups small and avoid trampling plants

PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT

- Carry out all waste – leave the area cleaner than you found it
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations securely

PROPERLY DISPOSE OF WHAT YOU CAN'T PACK OUT

- Do all cleaning and washing as far away from waterways as possible
- Clean fish away from camp
- Use biodegradable soaps
- Carry out human waste where toilet facilities are not available

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Respect all wildlife – enjoy from a distance without disturbing
- Respect our natural & cultural heritage – leave rocks, plants, trees, and artifacts alone; observe but do not touch!
- Respect the privacy of others & private property

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

- Use existing fire rings and keep fires small or use a camp stove
- Use only downed, dead wood smaller than your wrist
- Leave limbs on standing trees (dead or alive)
- Make sure any fires are completely out and cold before leaving the site
- Avoid fires during droughts or windy conditions

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience
- Be courteous to other river users
- Keep noises to a minimum – enjoy the sounds of nature
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors



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