

MIDDLE

DELAWARE RIVER

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 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 secluded 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 ridge 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-Deleware on the Pennsylvania side. Shawnee-on-Deleware 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 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.



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 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 access, 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 manmade features include the Delaware & Raritan Canal, Delaware Canal, and Roebing 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.



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 tramping 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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