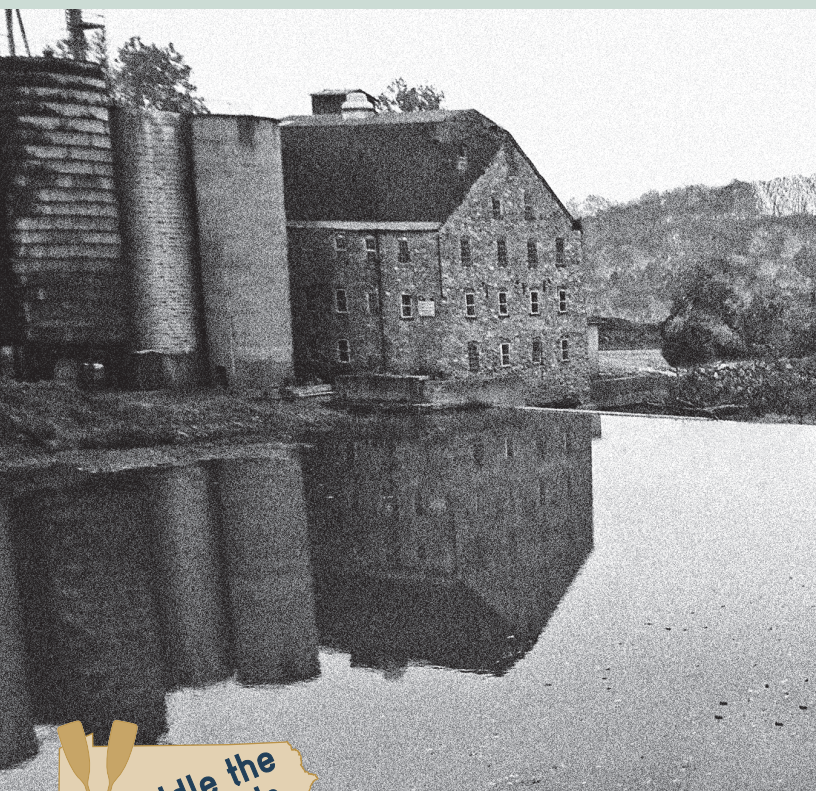


# Conestoga River



The Great Outdoors, Close To Home —  
**THE PENNSYLVANIA HIGHLANDS**

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## About the Mid-Atlantic Highlands



The Mid-Atlantic Highlands are the rugged foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Forming a 3.5 million-acre forested greenbelt around Harrisburg, Reading, Allentown, New York City, and Hartford, this region stretches from northwestern Connecticut across the Hudson Valley of New York, through northern New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania, ending in the Michaux State Forest of south-central Pennsylvania. The Mid-Atlantic Highlands region is known for its large forests and parks, pristine streams and lakes, rich farmland, and cultural treasures. Congress designated the region “nationally significant” when it passed the Highlands Conservation Act in 2004. The Pennsylvania portion of the Mid-Atlantic Highlands covers roughly 1.9 million acres across 13 counties and is a state-designated Mega-Greenway.



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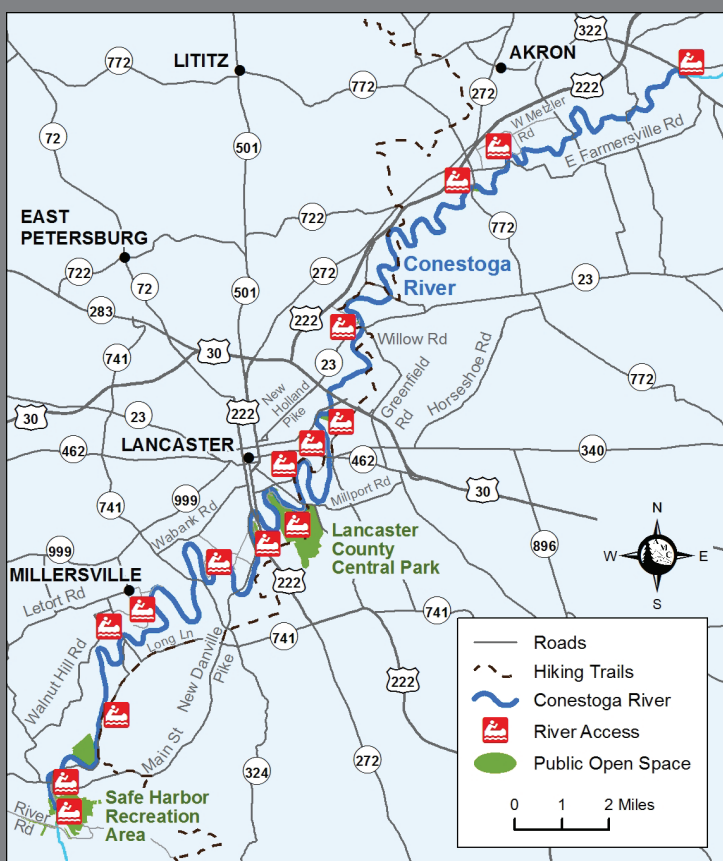
*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*

# Conestoga River

Winding through the fertile, rolling terrain of Lancaster County, the **Conestoga River** is characterized by countless rapids providing for great paddling opportunities and an experience enriched with the traditional Amish farm culture that has made this corner of the Pennsylvania Highlands a nationally famous tourist destination. Three major tributaries to the Conestoga are also commonly navigated so when water levels are higher, paddlers should consider exploring Muddy Creek, Hammer Creek and the Cocalico Creek. A number of public access points along the Conestoga from Brownstown to its confluence with the Susquehanna provide paddlers the chance to try different rapids and riffles along the way. Old canal locks, dam ruins and a number of historic bridges also add to the experience. The Conestoga has a large watershed and can have higher flows than other nearby rivers and creeks, so paddlers should be prepared for larger waves if paddling after a heavy rain event or during spring melt. The Conestoga's close proximity to the City of Lancaster and a number of other towns makes this river a great backyard paddling destination, yet still worth the drive for traveling paddlers looking to enjoy its mild but consistent whitewater and unique scenery.

**Flows:** The USGS gauge in Lancaster (#01576500) provides very accurate flow information for paddlers, with 3.0 feet being the very minimum.

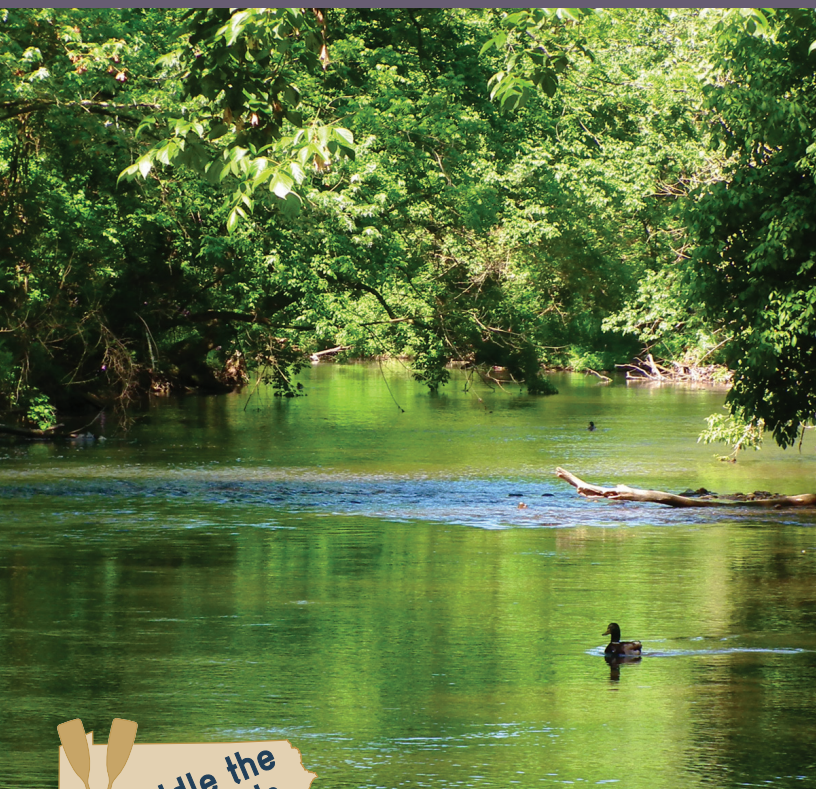
**For more information:** The Lancaster County Department of Parks and Recreation offers waterproof trail maps for \$10: [goo.gl/IPAEg](http://goo.gl/IPAEg). To access information about trails and parks in the PA Highlands, visit AMC's *Interactive Outdoor Activity Guide* for mobile phones: [highlandsmobile.outdoors.org](http://highlandsmobile.outdoors.org).



This map does not display dams and other river hazards.



# Conococheague Creek



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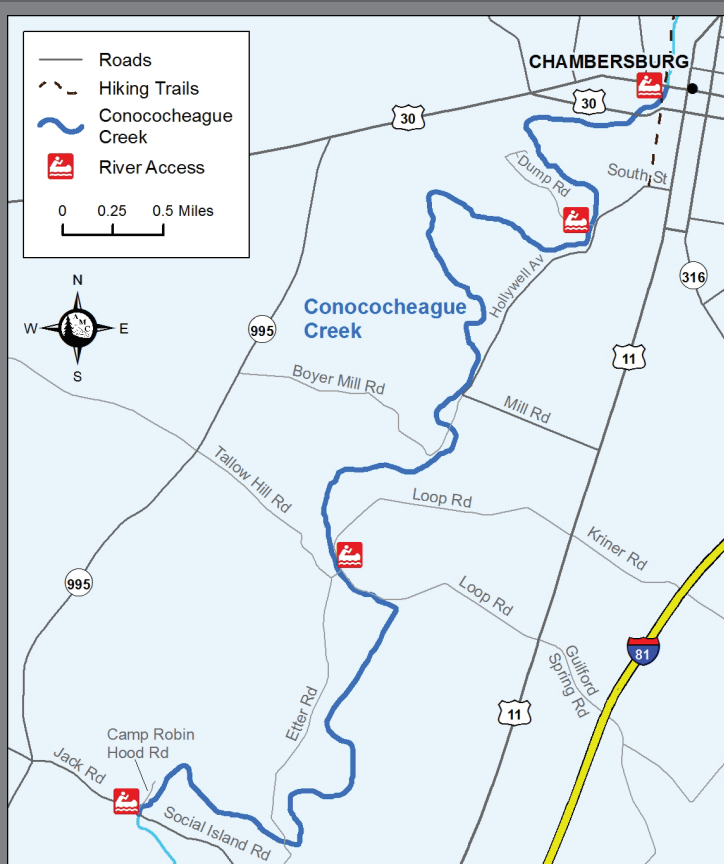
*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*

# Conococheague Creek

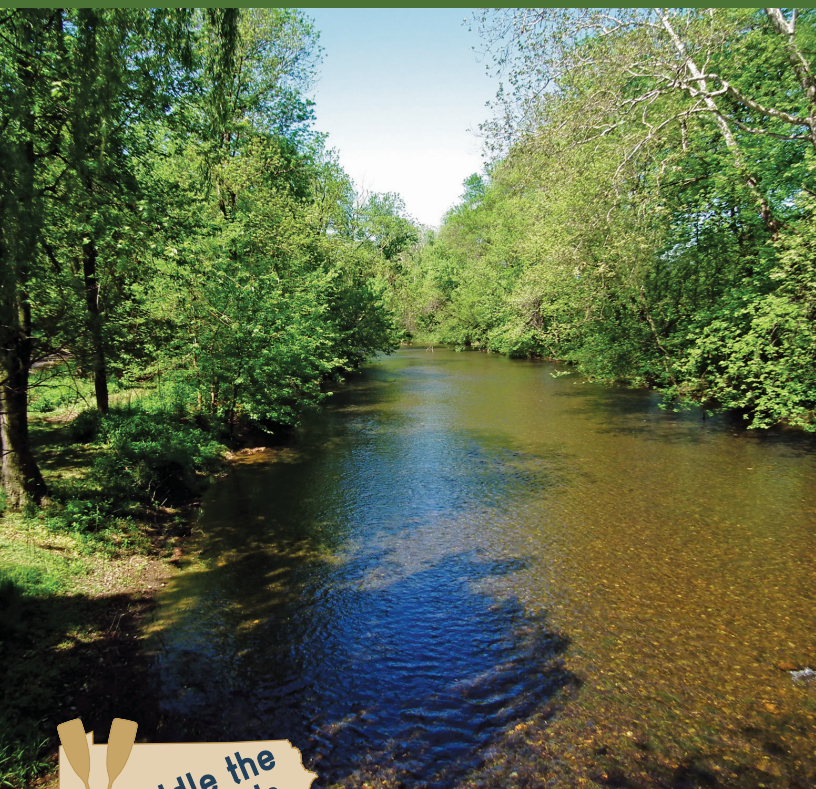
The Conococheague Creek is a unique waterway originating in Michaux State Forest and Caledonia State Park, then flowing through Chambersburg on its way to the Potomac River in Maryland. Though access to the creek can be limited, especially through the winding farm country of the creek's lower reaches, paddlers can start in Chambersburg just off of Route 30, or a few miles south near the Stevens Elementary School. From here, riffles and small rapids will keep paddlers' attention and many types of waterfowl are commonly seen. As the creek enters a wooded gorge below town, paddlers will need to take the right channel, requiring a portage around a dam. Below this, the creek mellows to a gentle pace through the countryside of Franklin County. Paddling on the Conococheague in Maryland is also popular, though the creek is even more mellow and meandering at that point. For its proximity to Chambersburg, the Conococheague is a delightful close-to-home paddling trip and a true adventure through this bucolic area of the Pennsylvania Highlands.

**Flows:** The Conococheague holds water well and runs frequently. The USGS gauge (#01614500) for the Conococheague Creek at Fairview, MD should read at least 250 cfs.

**For more information:** To access information about trails and parks in the PA Highlands, visit AMC's *Interactive Outdoor Activity Guide* for mobile phones: [highlandsmobile.outdoors.org](http://highlandsmobile.outdoors.org)



# Conodoguinet Creek



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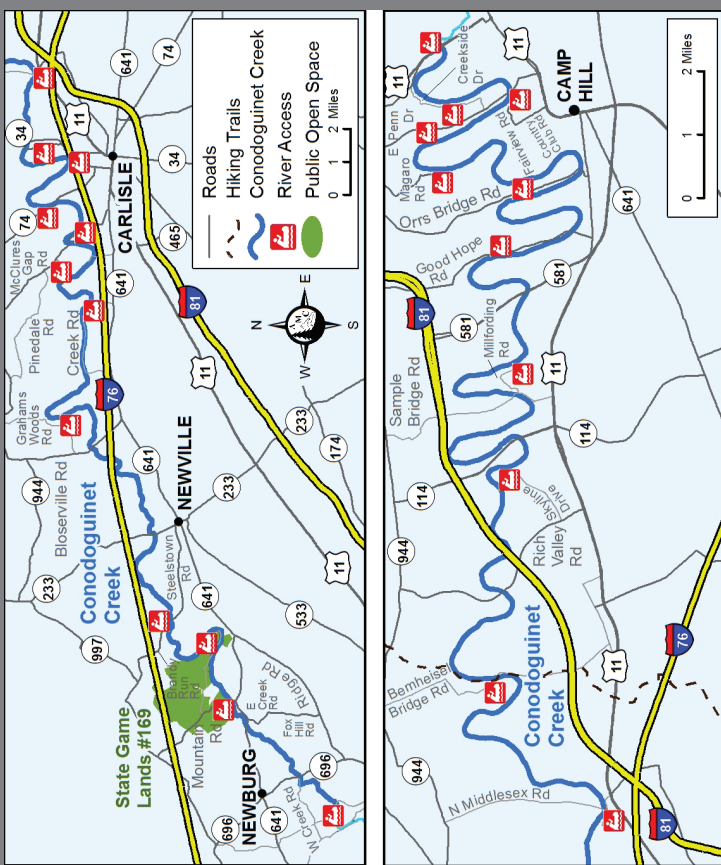
*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*

# Conodoguinet Creek

On its 90-mile journey, the **Conodoguinet Creek** provides a scenic and enjoyable paddling destination for paddlers from near and far. Originating near Kittatinny Mountain in Franklin County, the creek flows through a number of small towns and villages before making its way to the Susquehanna River west of Harrisburg. Historically, the waters of the Conodoguinet powered many local mills and though the heritage of the area is not forgotten, paddlers today experience the creek in a very natural state with wooded banks and very few remaining dams. A significant hazard is found at a dam in Carlisle that cannot be navigated. Paddlers must plan beforehand to avoid this hazard, as a well-defined portage trail does not exist. A popular section of the creek for paddlers runs from Scott Farm on Bermheisel-Bridge Road to Willow Mill Park in Silver Spring Township. With a large watershed and relatively few rapids and obstructions, the Conodoguinet is often a great paddling destination when other rivers and streams are too low.

**Flows:** A USGS gauge on the Conodoguinet Creek in Hogestown (#01570000) provides reliable river flow information, with 1.7 feet recommended as a minimum.

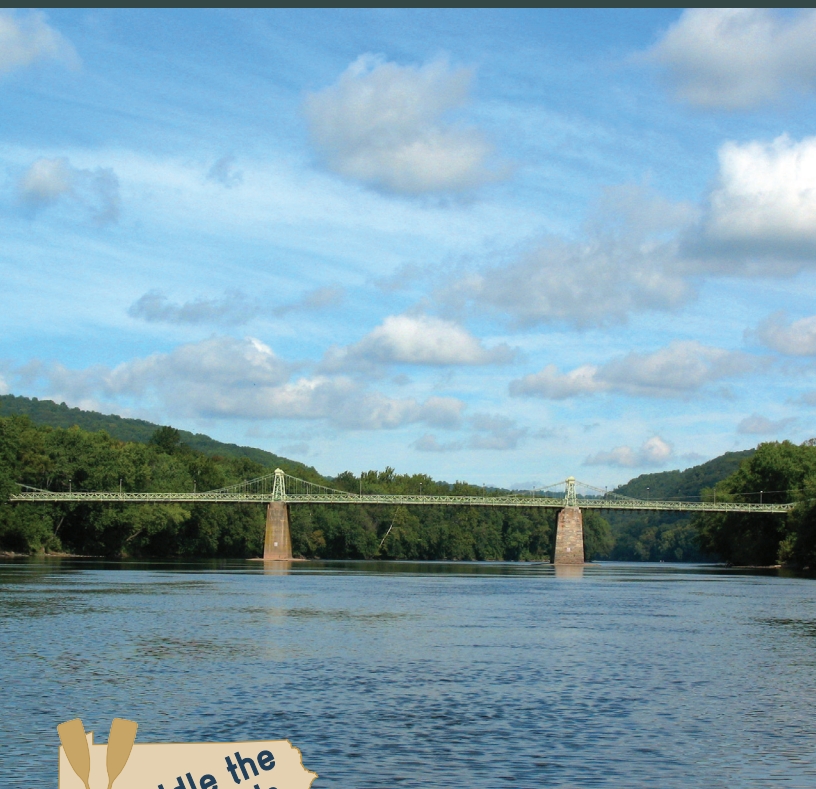
**For more information:** Cumberland County provides updates on access points and a downloadable trail map on its website: [ccpa.net/watertrails](http://ccpa.net/watertrails). To access information about trails and parks in the PA Highlands, visit AMC's *Interactive Outdoor Activity Guide* for mobile phones: [highlandsmobile.outdoors.org](http://highlandsmobile.outdoors.org).



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# Delaware River



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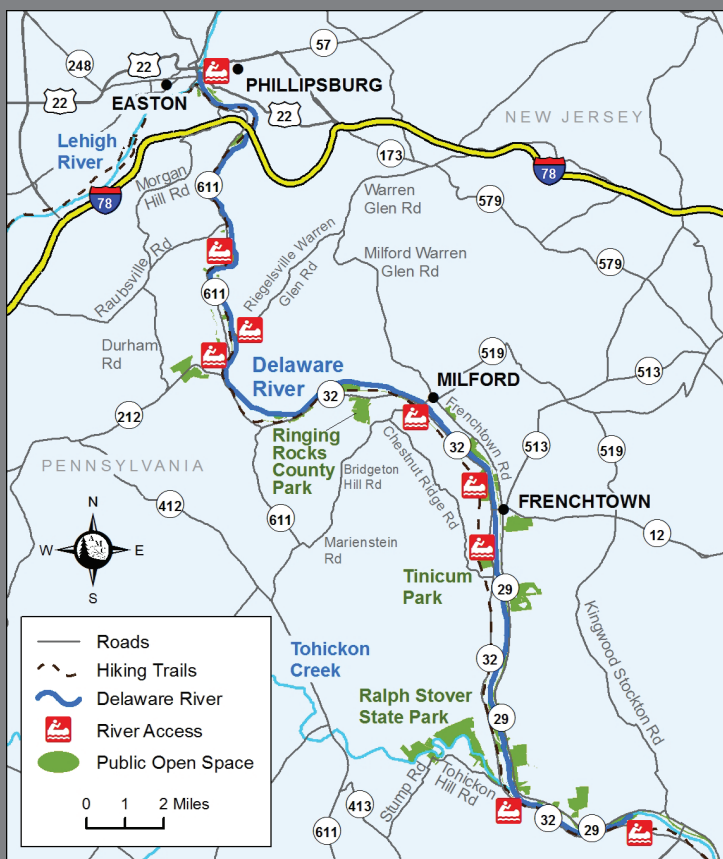
*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*

# Delaware River

As one of the most cherished and recognized rivers in the Nation, the **Delaware River** is a widely popular paddling destination complimented by welcoming communities and multi-use trails along its scenic banks. Though paddling is also popular on the nationally-designated Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River and through the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, this section of the river in the Pennsylvania Highlands carries its own distinct National Wild and Scenic River designation and offers great day trips not to be overlooked. Islands and historic villages dot this stretch of the river, which is home to a great variety of birds, including bald eagles, great blue herons, cormorants and osprey. The many boat ramps and access points along the river connect to multi-use trails and are great places to picnic and learn about the river corridor, thanks to excellent interpretive signs. Paddlers will want to be aware of wing dams at Bulls Island/Lumberville and a much more challenging wing dam in New Hope/Lambertville. The wing dams are open in the center and can be paddled, but these features constrict the Delaware's flow and increase the challenge of the rapids for paddlers.

**Flows:** Though the river is navigable at even the lowest summertime levels, flows between 3.2 feet and 12 feet on the USGS gauge in Riegelsville, PA (#014575000) are recommended.

**For more information:** View/download water trail maps: [delawareriver-watertrail.org](http://delawareriver-watertrail.org) and [nj.gov/drbc/basin/recreation/recreation/](http://nj.gov/drbc/basin/recreation/recreation/). To access information about trails and parks in the PA Highlands, visit AMC's *Interactive Outdoor Activity Guide* for mobile phones: [highlandsmobile.outdoors.org](http://highlandsmobile.outdoors.org).



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# East Branch Perkiomen Creek



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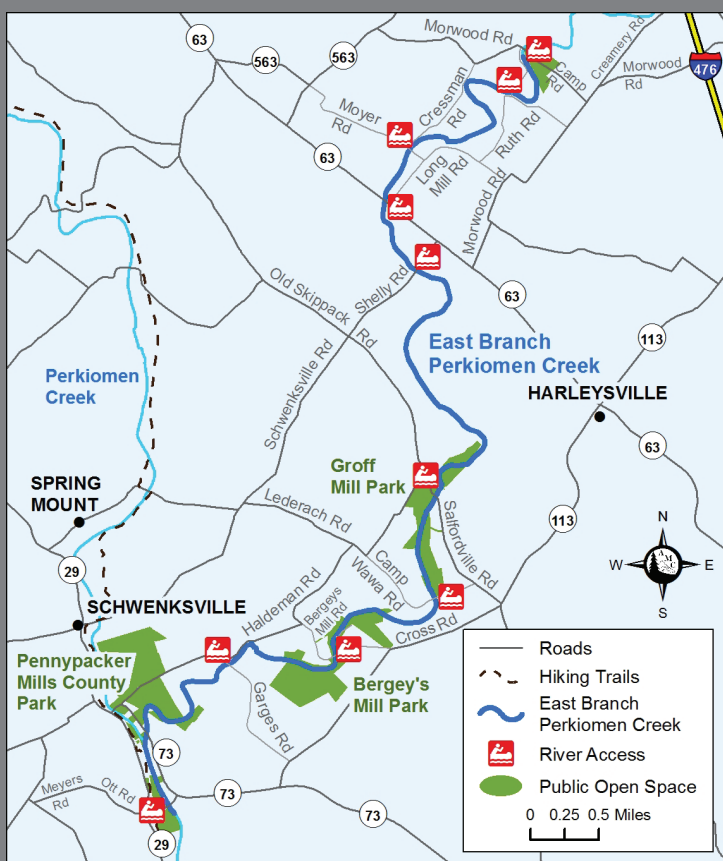
*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*

# East Branch Perkiomen Creek

The **East Branch Perkiomen Creek** is a novice paddling option in a bucolic corner of Montgomery County. This scenic creek begins just south of Nockamixon State Park and flows 25 miles to the Perkiomen Creek, the Schuylkill River's largest tributary. Though the upper creek is navigable, a recommended trip begins at Route 63 (Sumneytown Pike) with a take-out at Central Perkiomen Valley Park at Plank Road on the Perkiomen Creek. This stretch of the East Branch winds through secluded forested slopes and farmed floodplains teeming with wildlife. Numerous small riffles and rapids increase in number and difficulty along the way, though none are too challenging for a beginning paddler. Historic sites, including 18th century farms, old cottages and a beautiful stone arch bridge, plus other traces of the past add enjoyment to the trip. Expect at least one portage at a dam just upstream from Camp Wawa Road, and although strainers are uncommon on this creek, conditions can change season to season. At the Perkiomen Creek confluence, continue downstream to Central Perkiomen Valley Park and after carefully navigating the deteriorating mill dam, the take-out is on the right under the Plank Road bridge. Paddlers can also easily scout and/or carry around the dam on the left side of the creek.

**Flows:** The East Branch has a USGS gauge (#01472620) located in Dublin, which is a very reliable source of flow information. Look for a minimum of 120 cfs or about 2.4' on the USGS gauge.

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# Lehigh River



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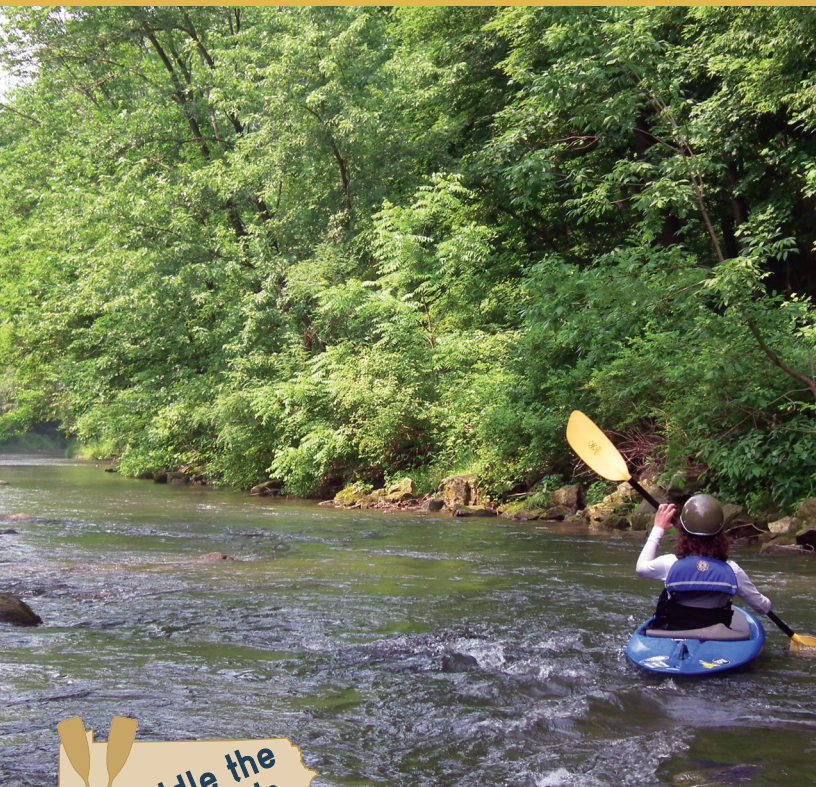


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*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*



# Little Lehigh Creek



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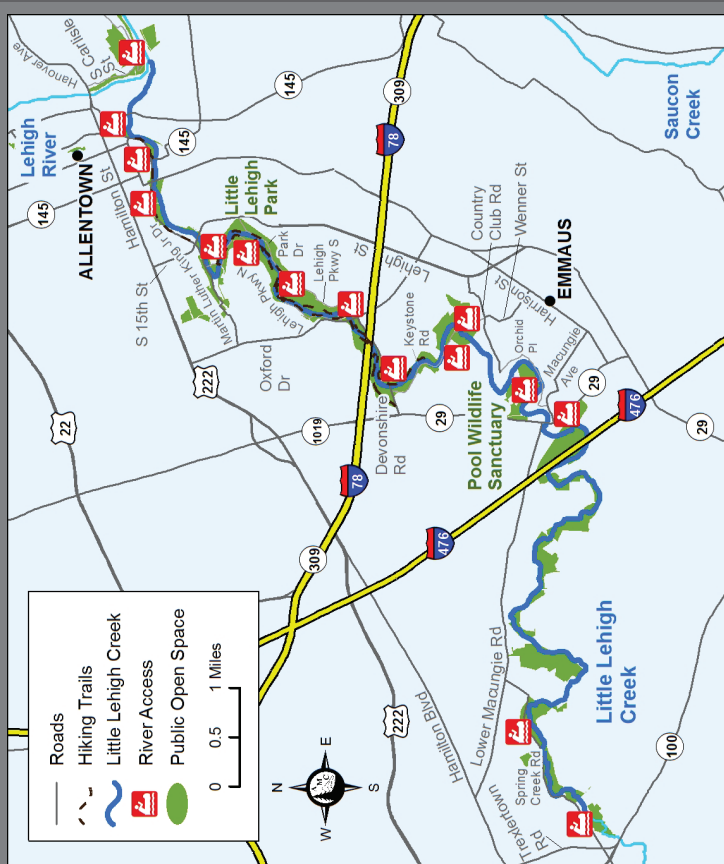
*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*

# Little Lehigh Creek

The **Little Lehigh Creek** is a cold-water limestone stream that offers a surprisingly scenic journey through Allentown, one of Pennsylvania's largest cities. The upper creek traverses many expanses of open space including the Pool Wildlife Sanctuary, home to the Wildlands Conservancy and a popular environmental education center. Paddlers can begin their trip far upstream, though there are many obstacles that need to be portaged in the upper reaches, including low bridges, strainers and small dams. The Little Lehigh Creek's most popular section is through the Lehigh Parkway, a linear park in downtown Allentown that features a yearly slalom race for paddlers, as well as numerous hiking and jogging trails and excellent river access for trout fisherman and paddlers alike. Downstream of the Lehigh Parkway, the creek enters a more urban section of Allentown, traveling close to busy city streets and pouring over a few dams and weirs before being joined by the Jordan Creek near the Lehigh River confluence. Paddlers continuing below the Lehigh Parkway should be aware of these river hazards. The Little Lehigh Creek is commonly used as a training site by local canoe clubs as it holds water well and offers a good option for paddling when other streams in the region are at very low water levels.

**Flows:** To paddle the upper Little Lehigh Creek, look for 95 cfs or more on the USGS gauge (#01451500) near Allentown, PA. When flows are lower, constricted rapids at the Lehigh Parkway provide paddling opportunities.

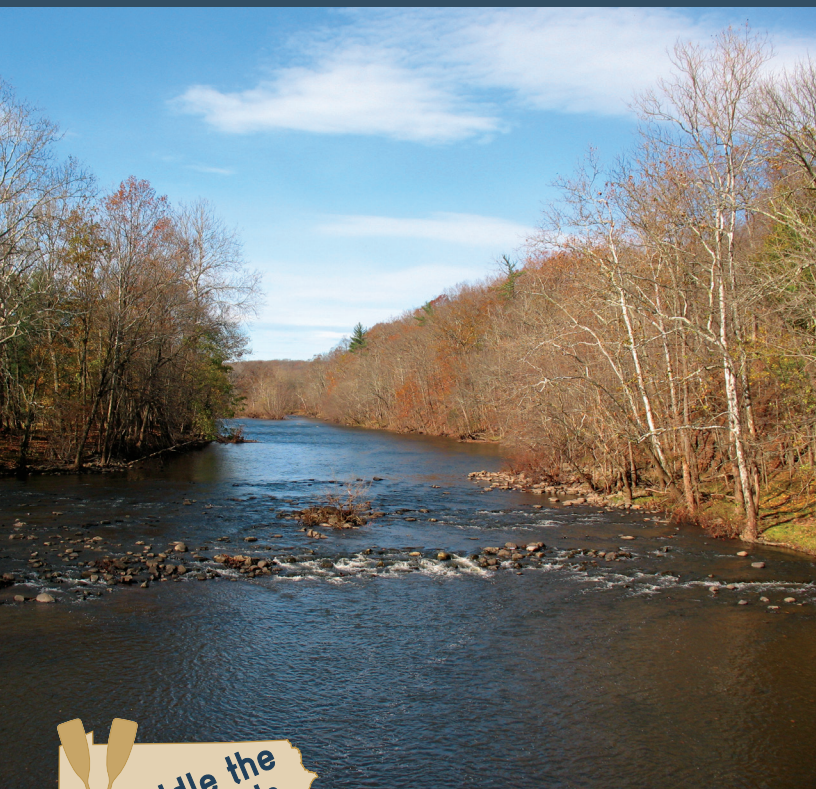
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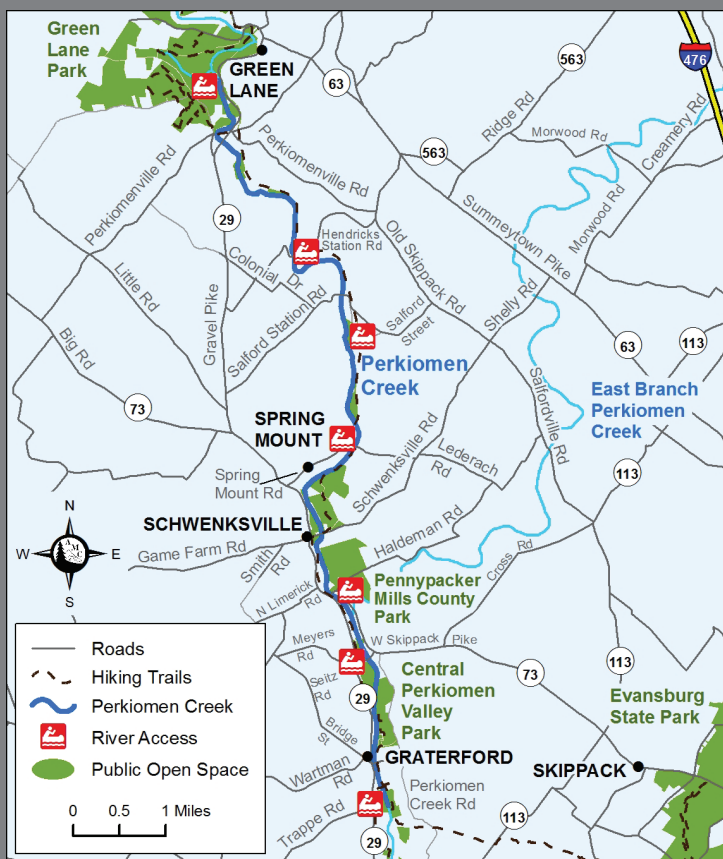
*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*

# Perkiomen Creek

Paddlers will understand why the famed naturalist John James Audubon called the banks of the **Perkiomen Creek** home. Beginning as far upstream as Green Lane Park, paddlers will find numerous mill dams and bridges as the Perkiomen flows over countless rapids and riffles to the confluence of the Schuylkill River. Though many of the creek's dams have eroded, they all present hazards and should be approached carefully and portaged, if a safe route through cannot be found. Above Schwenksville, steep wooded slopes drop down to the creek and large rocks form intermediately-difficult rapids that lessen in intensity along the way. Many begin paddling at either the Route 73 bridge or Central Perkiomen Valley Park, which is a mellower trip as the valley begins to flatten into rolling countryside and farmlands. Montgomery County's 20-mile long Perkiomen Trail follows the creek, allowing paddlers to couple their day on the water with cycling or walking on this flat and well-maintained rail trail. A number of parks and bridges along the way provide excellent public access. After a day on the Perkiomen Creek, paddlers will understand why this area of the Pennsylvania Highlands is well-known for its rich history and exceptional recreational resources.

**Flows:** To navigate the creek above Schwenksville, the USGS gauge on the Perkiomen Creek in Graterford (#01473000) should read over 600 cfs. Flows above 300 cfs are sufficient to navigate the Perkiomen's lower reaches.

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# Saucon Creek



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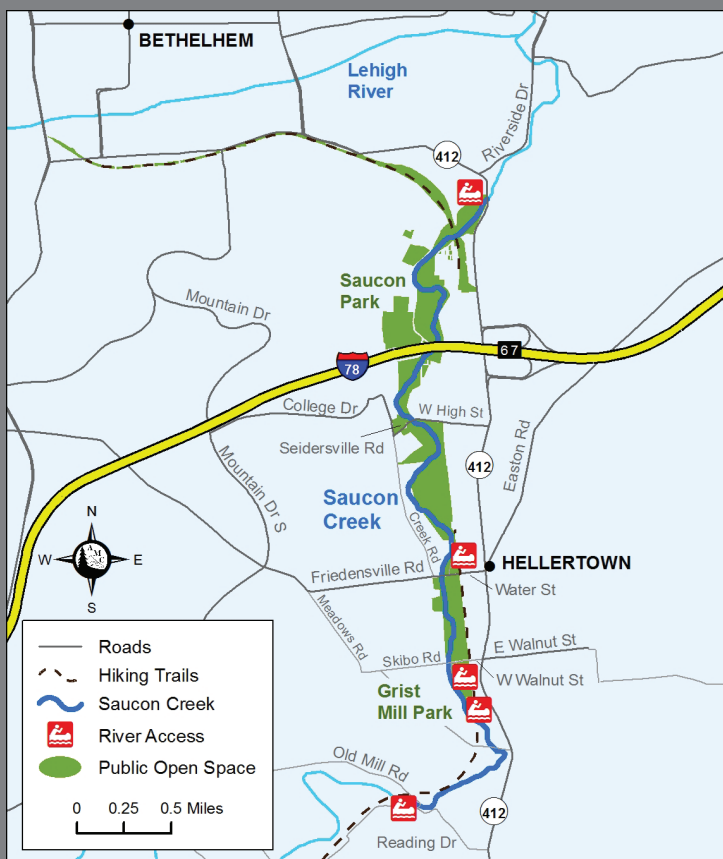
*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*

# Saucon Creek

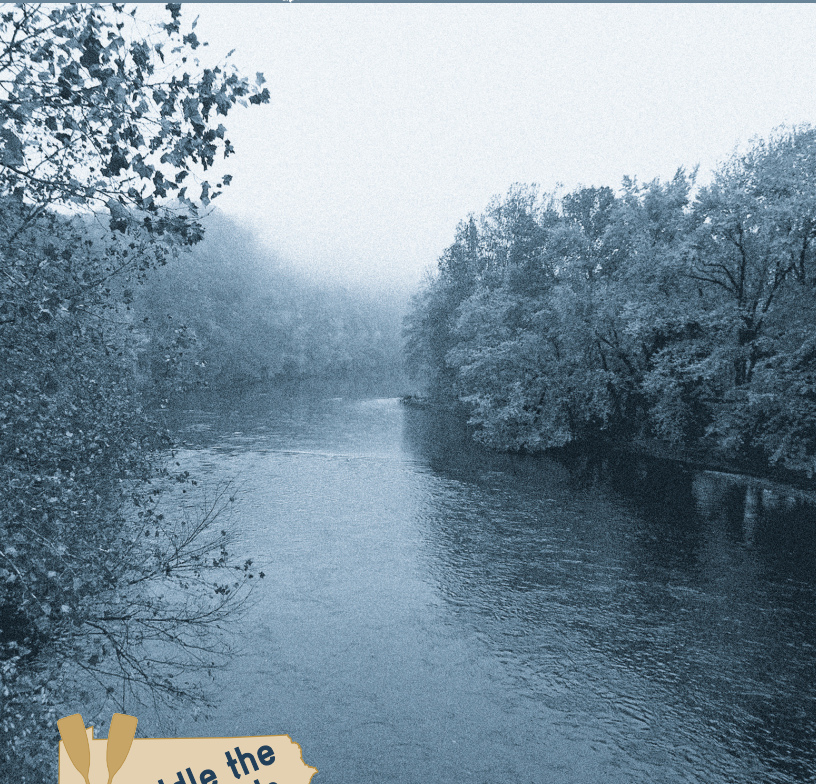
Flowing into the Lehigh River in Bethlehem, the **Saucon Creek** is widely cherished by paddlers, fishermen and other outdoor recreationists. This small paddling stream has a number of weirs and other river obstacles, but within this tucked away wooded gorge, those lucky enough to catch the Saucon Creek with enough water will find abundant wildlife, historic structures along its bank and many people enjoying the adjacent parks. The creek's rapids are largely intermediate in difficulty with the winding nature of the waterway keeping paddlers on their toes throughout the trip. Once in Hellertown, the Saucon Creek is flanked by parks and trails, including the popular Saucon Rail Trail. Just after paddling under Route 78, a take-out at the ball field is recommended, as the creek becomes less scenic and the next available take-out isn't for a couple of miles downstream on the Lehigh River. Since the creek is small and there is no gauge, it can be difficult to catch the Saucon Creek with enough water to navigate, but it should have sufficient flow after a heavy rain or following spring melt.

**Flows:** The nearest USGS gauge is on the Monocacy Creek in Bethlehem (#01452500). Paddlers should look for 80 cfs on the Monocacy or should consider paddling the creek within one to two days of a heavy rain storm. The USGS gauge on the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek (#01472620) can also be helpful. Look for at least 90 cfs on the East Branch gauge.

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# Schuylkill River



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The Mid-Atlantic Highlands are the rugged foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Forming a 3.5 million-acre forested greenbelt around Harrisburg, Reading, Allentown, New York City, and Hartford, this region stretches from northwestern Connecticut across the Hudson Valley of New York, through northern New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania, ending in the Michaux State Forest of south-central Pennsylvania. The Mid-Atlantic Highlands region is known for its large forests and parks, pristine streams and lakes, rich farmland, and cultural treasures. Congress designated the region “nationally significant” when it passed the Highlands Conservation Act in 2004. The Pennsylvania portion of the Mid-Atlantic Highlands covers roughly 1.9 million acres across 13 counties and is a state-designated Mega-Greenway.

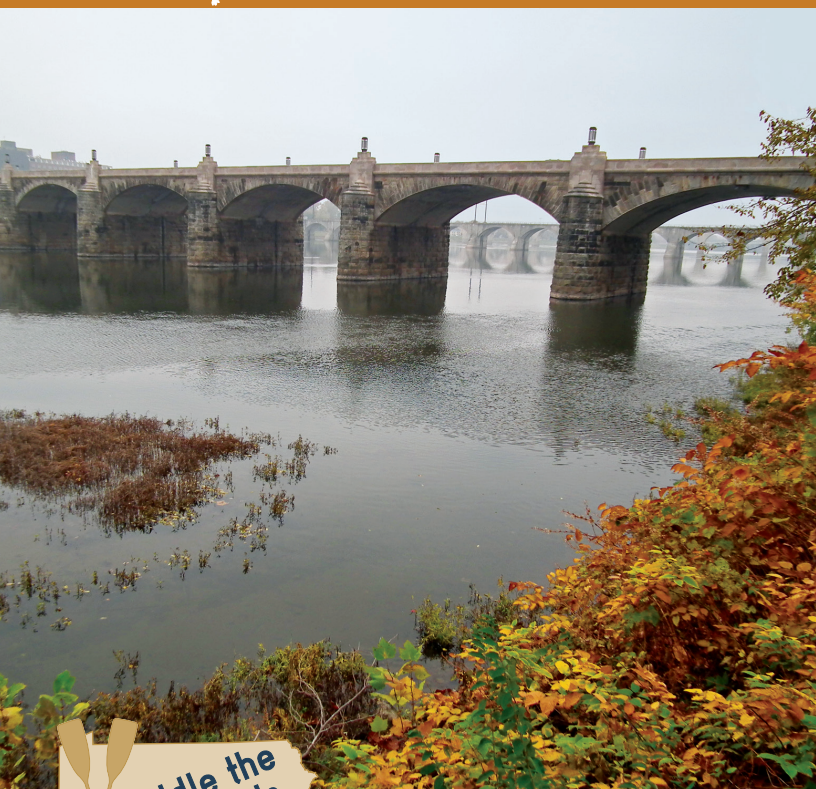


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*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*



# Susquehanna River



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# Susquehanna River

Above Harrisburg, the **Susquehanna River** offers scenic paddling with a number of fun rapids, such as the Dauphin Narrows, and many islands popular for picnics and camping. As the river enters the Pennsylvania Highlands, it mellows significantly and features longer stretches of slack water where paddlers will enjoy some notable landmarks like the railroad bridge at Rockville, featuring 48 stone arches. Paddlers on this stretch of the river must be aware of the hazardous Dock Street Dam immediately upstream of the Route 83 bridge in Harrisburg. It forms a very dangerous low-head feature navigable at most levels along the river's far left shore, though portaging is encouraged. Paddlers wishing to avoid this dam and the somewhat urban setting can put in along the Yellow Breeches Creek in New Cumberland on the downstream side of the dam at the ball fields. Below Harrisburg, the river is wide and enjoyable with many islands and channels. A small riffle above the Three Mile Island generating station is the only notable rapid before a large weir at York Haven. Paddlers can take out in York Haven on the river's right bank or portage the dam and continue to Wrightsville, past the popular Chickies Rock overlook.

**Flows:** The Susquehanna River gauge in Harrisburg (#0157055) is an accurate way to assess conditions. Levels below five feet are very suitable for beginners while levels above that are navigable, but indicate considerably faster water which makes recoveries and rescues far more challenging.

**For more information:** [susquehannawatertrail.org/](http://susquehannawatertrail.org/). To access information about trails and parks in the PA Highlands, visit AMC's *Interactive Outdoor Activity Guide* for mobile phones: [highlandsmobile.outdoors.org](http://highlandsmobile.outdoors.org).



This map does not display dams and other river hazards.



# Swatara Creek



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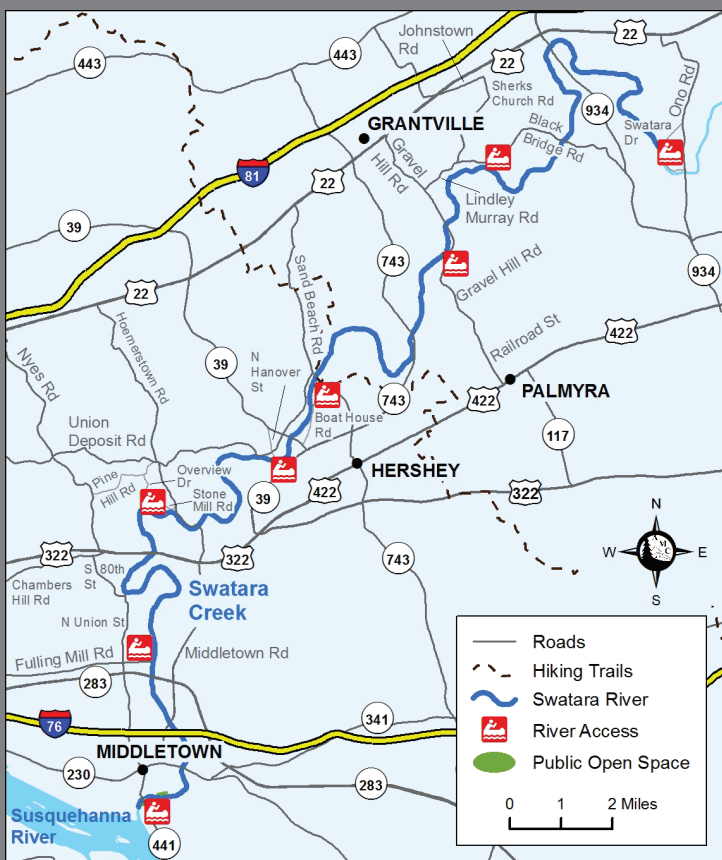
*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*

# Swatara Creek

The **Swatara Creek** Water Trail is a wonderful paddling destination sponsored by the Swatara Watershed Association. Their headquarters on Black's Bridge Road is the most common put-in, and features primitive camping, a large pavilion, over a half-mile of creek frontage for boat access and canoes, and paddling gear available for public use. Though the Swatara can be navigated upstream, paddlers usually navigate the section below here to the confluence of the Susquehanna River. A trip down the Swatara reveals both historic and present-day signs of the economic engines of this corner of Dauphin and Lebanon Counties. Paddlers will pass a countless number of remains from the former Union Canal, first envisioned by William Penn as a way to connect the Susquehanna River with Philadelphia via the Schuylkil River. Completed in 1828, it operated for nearly 60 years. The Swatara Valley remains predominately farmland, though Hershey Park amusement center, a nationally-known attraction, is located here, close to where the Swatara meets the Susquehanna River. The Swatara is an excellent waterway for beginners, as it is largely placid and gently moving, though two dams will require portages. The Jonathan Eshenour Memorial Trail and the Horse-Shoe Trail traverse the area and plans are in the works to connect these trails with the PA Highlands Trail Network.

**Flows:** The most common way to judge conditions on the Swatara is by the USGS gauge in Harper Tavern (#01573000). Look for flows of 0.4 to 2.2 feet.

**For more information:** [mbcomp.com/swatara/](http://mbcomp.com/swatara/). To access information about trails and parks in the PA Highlands, visit AMC's *Interactive Outdoor Activity Guide* for mobile phones: [highlandsmobile.outdoors.org](http://highlandsmobile.outdoors.org).



# Tohickon Creek



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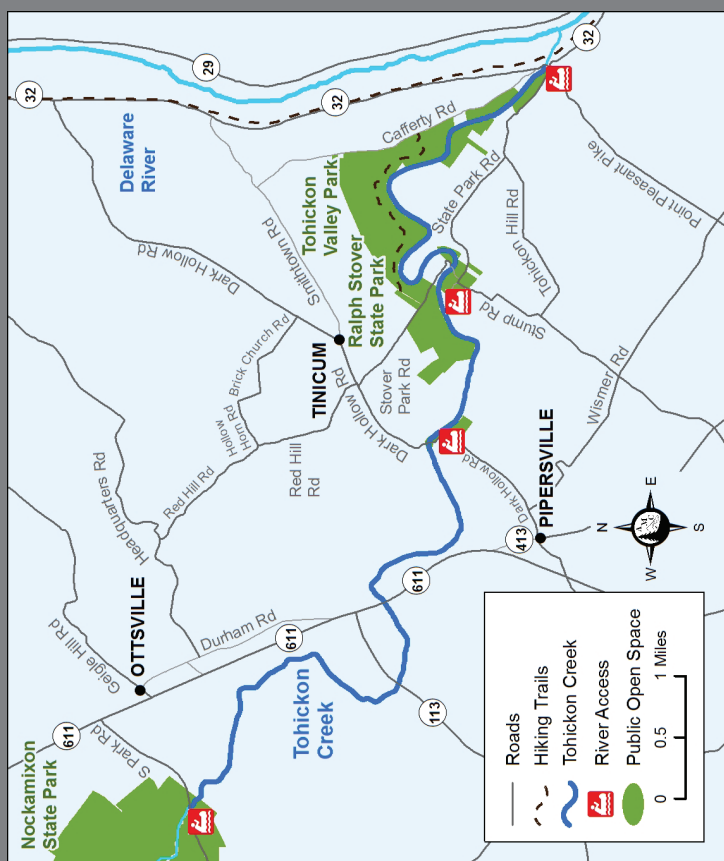
*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*

# Tohickon Creek

The **Tohickon Creek** is known far and wide for its scenic gorge, the numerous parks and trails along its banks, and guaranteed spring and fall upstream dam releases that create a whitewater paradise for kayakers, canoeists and rafters from all over the Mid-Atlantic region. A trip down the Tohickon will thrill novices and experts alike. Below Lake Nockamixon, the Tohickon Creek is commonly divided into two sections. The upper reach, from below the Nockamixon dam at South Park Road to Ralph Stover State Park, is suitable for novice to intermediate paddlers who will find a number of riffles and small rapids as well as a few portages around old dams. This seven-mile stretch runs through an iconic Bucks County landscape of rolling hills with historic bridges, mills and farms. The lower reach, from Ralph Stover State Park to Tohickon Valley Park at Point Pleasant Pike, has very challenging whitewater with rapids named Green Monster, Race Course and Pyramid Rock. Although this stretch should be taken seriously and is suitable for experienced paddlers only, its proximity to the Lehigh Valley and Philadelphia make it a popular whitewater paddling destination. Tohickon Creek has even been the site of slalom and downriver wildwater races at the US National and Olympic levels.

**Flows:** A USGS gauge is located in Pipersville (#01459500). For either reach, look for a minimum of 300cfs. The DCNR releases whitewater from Lake Nockamixon the last weekend in March and first weekend in November of each year. Releases usually provide a flow of about 750 cfs.

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# Tulpehocken Creek



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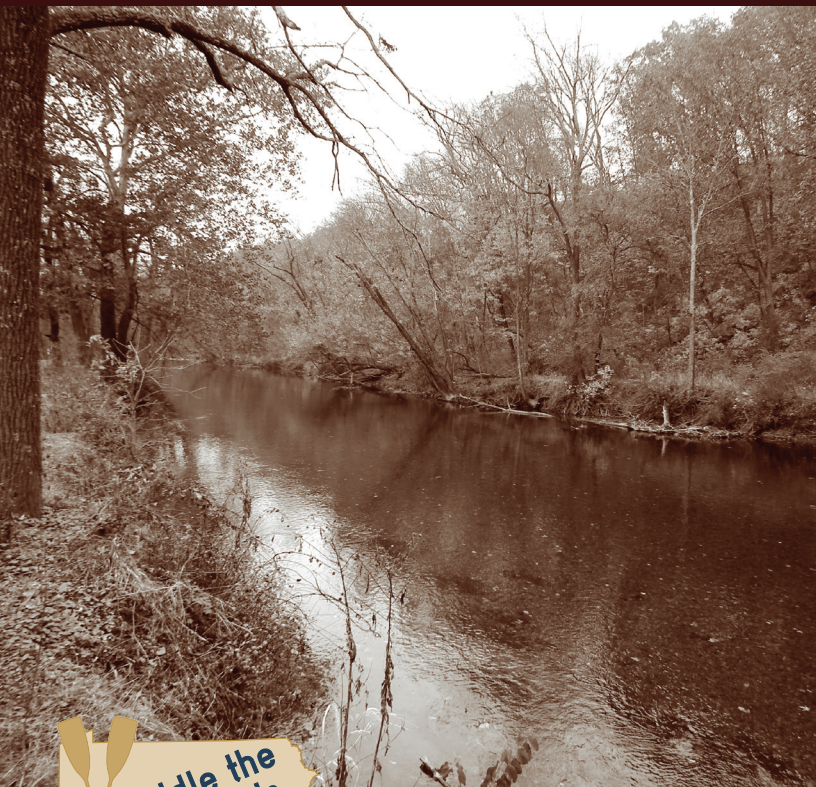


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*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*



# Yellow Breeches Creek



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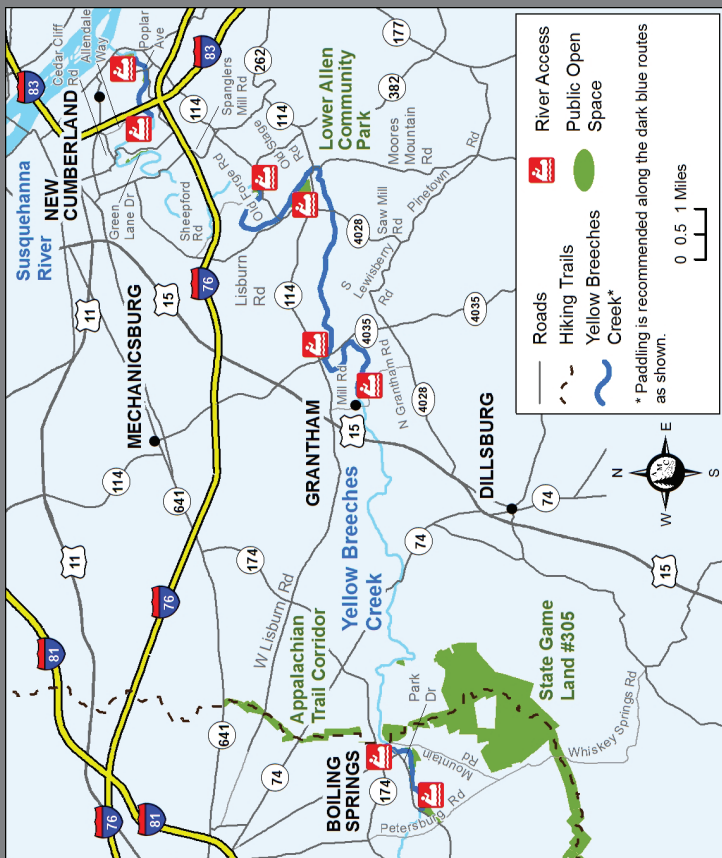
*Photos courtesy of Mark Zakutansky and John Brunner*

# Yellow Breeches Creek

A truly cherished waterway in the Pennsylvania Highlands, the **Yellow Breeches Creek** flows through the limestone-rich Cumberland Valley, providing cool water and reliable flows for paddlers. Though the Cumberland Valley is known for its rich agricultural lands, the creek is surrounded by wooded banks, which provide welcome shade on a hot day. A number of springs add cold water to the creek, contributing to the exceptional trout fishing here. Rapids on the Yellow Breeches attract paddlers from far and wide, making it a popular recreational destination. Many dams and weirs, though, make some sections of the creek less suitable than others for those wishing to avoid such obstacles. The map below is broken up into three popular sections for those wishing to avoid the dams. A number of historic stone arch and covered bridges, as well as colonial-era communities like Boiling Springs, add to the allure of the area. While the riffles and rapids will keep paddlers' attention, many pools and slower sections of the creek provide a great opportunity to spot the numerous species of wildlife that call the creek corridor home. Yellow Breeches Creek is a state-designated scenic river. Many areas along the creek are private property, so paddlers must remember to only use designated access areas and respect fisherman and other river users.

**Flows:** A USGS gauge near Camp Hill (#01571500) should read a minimum of 1.4 feet to navigate the waterway.

**For more information:** [ccpa.net/watertrails](http://ccpa.net/watertrails). To access information about trails and parks in the PA Highlands, visit AMC's *Interactive Outdoor Activity Guide* for mobile phones: [highlandsmobile.outdoors.org](http://highlandsmobile.outdoors.org).



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