



Susquehanna River Water Trail

NORTH BRANCH

Section 2: Laceyville to Harding

Map & Guide

Water trails are recreational waterways on a lake, river or ocean between specific locations, containing access points and day-use and/or camping sites for the boating public. Water trails emphasize low-impact use and promote stewardship of the resources. Explore this unique Pennsylvania water trail.



photo: John Capwell

For your safety and enjoyment:

- Always wear a life jacket.
- Obtain proper instruction in boating skills.
- Know fishing and boating regulations.
- Be prepared for river hazards.
- Carry proper equipment.



Paddling at Vosburg

photo: David Buck

THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER—North Branch

The Susquehanna River is an American treasure reflecting the unique places and people that comprise the Pennsylvania heartland. Nearly 250 municipalities touch upon the river as it winds its way through the Commonwealth. Today, perhaps as never before, the Susquehanna has the potential to shape our future prospects in ways that we can only begin to imagine.

This stretch of the river is characterized by rolling meadows, forests and crop land, set amidst seemingly endless mountains. The glaciated landscape is marked by numerous lakes and streams. The river is defined by frequent bends and meanders in response to its underlying geology. Much of the area is within the Endless Mountains Heritage Region and it offers abundant outdoor recreation such as fishing, boating, hiking, biking, skiing, snowmobiling and scenic driving tours. Classic Americana still flourishes in small river towns like Susquehanna, Hallstead, Sayre, Athens, Towanda, Wyalusing, Laceyville and Tunkhannock. Attractions include Standing Stone, French Azilum, scenic U.S. Route 6, covered bridges, historic canal remnants, numerous river access points, and convenient proximity to state game lands.



Riverside Park in Tunkhannock

photo: David Buck

FLOATING THE RIVER

Day Trips on the North Branch of the Susquehanna River Water Trail

In planning a day paddle on the North Branch of the Susquehanna, different factors should be taken into consideration. Weather conditions, river gauge height, and the experience of the paddlers should be assessed before leaving for the day. Paddlers should evaluate the risk for themselves and go paddling only if they feel comfortable.

The weather forecast should be reviewed for temperature, storms and wind conditions. The combined temperatures of the water and the air should be over 100 degrees. Thunderstorms can produce violent lightning and wind and can be very dangerous if you are out anywhere along the river. Even on a warm sunny day a steady head wind can make paddling difficult. Know the weather forecast and prepare accordingly.

The river height is provided by USGS gauges at locations along the river and feeder streams and is found at <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/marfc> for Pennsylvania streams. The base level for each gauge will vary depending on location. The gauges in Towanda, Wilkes-Barre, and Bloomsburg will read about the same height. If these gauges are at two feet, the gauge at Waverly will be three feet, Meshoppen will be nine feet, and Danville will be five feet. Use these base levels for a safe paddle. If the gauges at Towanda and Wilkes-Barre are over five feet and Bloomsburg is over six feet, you should not paddle if you are a novice. Any water height with water up into the trees can cause a dangerous situation for paddlers.

The paddling miles per hour will vary with the river height. The river can be paddled with a level in Towanda as low as -.5'. Levels up to 2' will be 2-3 miles per hour. Levels from 2'-4' will be 3-5 miles per hour, levels at 4'-5' can be 4-6 miles per hour. Levels under 1' can produce class I and II wave heights where the river funnels into the lower riverbed. It is easy to avoid these areas or have fun and paddle through them.

It is better to plan a shorter trip and enjoy the paddle by taking your time rather than to spend a long day in an unpredicted head wind. An 8- to 10-mile paddle might be enough for novice paddlers, and 15 to 18 miles for more experienced paddlers, at the 2' gauge level.

Review the caution areas prior to your trip.

PADDLING SAFETY TIPS

- Wear your life jacket. Some 80 percent of all recreational boating fatalities happen to people who are not wearing a life jacket.
- Expect to get wet. Even the best paddlers sometimes capsize or swamp their boats. Bring extra clothing in a waterproof bag.
- Be prepared to swim. If the water looks too hazardous to swim in, don't go paddling.
- If you capsize, hold on to your boat, unless it presents a life-threatening situation. If floating in current, position yourself on the upstream side of the capsized boat.
- Scout ahead whenever possible. Know the river. Avoid surprises.
- Be prepared for the weather. Get a forecast before you go. Sudden winds and rain are common and can turn a pleasant trip into a risky, unpleasant venture.
- Wear wading shoes or tennis shoes with wool, polypropylene, pile or neoprene socks.
- Never take your boat over a low-head dam.
- Portage (carry) your boat around any section of water about which you feel uncertain.
- Never boat alone. Boating safety increases with numbers.
- Keep painter lines (ropes tied to the bow) and any other ropes coiled and secured.
- Never tie a rope to yourself or to another paddler, especially a child.
- Kneel to increase your stability before entering rougher water, like a rapid.
- If you collide with an obstruction, lean toward it. This will usually prevent your capsizing or flooding the boat.
- File a float plan with a reliable person, indicating where you are going and when you will return. Remember to contact the person when you have returned safely.



PENNSYLVANIA BOATING REGULATIONS

- One wearable, Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD or life jacket) in serviceable condition and of the appropriate size is required for each person in your boat. If your boat is 16' or longer, one throwable device (seat cushion or ring buoy) is required. Canoes and kayaks, regardless of length, are not required to carry a throwable device.
- Life jackets must be worn by all children 12 years old and younger on all boats 20' or less in length while under way, and on all canoes and kayaks. Others are strongly encouraged to wear a PFD at all times on the water.
- All boats must display an anchor light (a white light visible 360°) when at anchor between sunset and sunrise. Boats can use a lantern or clip-on battery-powered unit to meet this requirement.
- All powered boats must show running lights between sunset and sunrise. Between sunset and sunrise, unpowered boats must carry a white light (visible 360°), installed or portable, ready to be displayed in time to avoid a collision.
- All motorboats are required to carry a sound-producing mechanical device audible for a half-mile. Athletic whistles meet this requirement.
- All motorboats must be registered, regardless of where they launch.
- Unpowered boats (canoes, kayaks, rowboats, rafts) using Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission access areas must either be registered OR display a valid launch permit. Launch permits can be purchased on the web at www.fish.state.pa.us. Click the "Outdoor Shop" icon.
- Operating watercraft, including canoes, kayaks, and rafts, under the influence of alcohol or drugs is illegal. The law is strongly enforced for user safety. For further information on boating regulations, contact the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission at www.fish.state.pa.us.



STEWARDSHIP

Help care for the land, water, and cultural resources along the Susquehanna River Water Trail by respecting wildlife, nature and other people. "Leave No Trace," a national outdoor ethics program, provides some guidelines to minimize your impact. For more information about "Leave No Trace" outdoor ethics, visit www.lnt.org.

Leave no trace for camping and day use:

1. Plan and prepare.
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
3. Dispose of waste properly.
4. Leave what you find.
5. Minimize campfires.
6. Respect wildlife.
7. Be considerate of other visitors.

FISHING OPPORTUNITIES

The North Branch Susquehanna River supports an exceptional warmwater fishery. Some of the more popular species are smallmouth bass, walleye, muskellunge, channel catfish, rock bass, common carp and white suckers. Smallmouth bass are the mainstay of the fishery and are abundant throughout the river. They can be caught just about any time of the year on a variety of baits and gear types. The best smallmouth fishing, however, usually occurs at the best time to float the river—during the peak of fall foliage season in October. Walleyes can be caught from the deeper pools and are particularly active during the colder months. Trophy muskellunge are often taken at the mouths of larger tributaries shortly after the season opens in May, and a growing northern pike population can also provide surprising action when fishing these areas. The best channel catfishing is downriver from Wyalusing. Consistently successful channel catfish anglers use bait at night during the summer.

RESPECT THE PRIVACY & RIGHTS OF PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

Plan and make stops on shorelines open to the public. Unless you are otherwise certain, assume the land is private property. In any case, avoid loud noises and boisterous behavior. Remember that sound carries across water much more clearly than on land. Many landowners enjoy peace and solitude overlooking the river from their back yards. Share the same courtesy that you would want. A friendly wave or quiet greeting is always welcome.

ALONG THE WAY

1 Friedenshutzen Monument (Mile 249L)—erected in 1871 at the site of a Moravian mission founded in 1763 by missionary David Zeisberger, who reorganized the local Indian village "M'chwihillusink" after being invited there by Papanhank, a Monsey chief of the Delaware tribe. The site was abandoned in 1772 when the pastors led 200 Christian Indians to Ohio to avoid frontier troubles before the American Revolution.

2 Indian Hill (Mile 246L)—name given to the site of a September 1778 skirmish, four miles south of Wyalusing on the east side of the river, between local Indians and Colonel Thomas Hartley's men after they had burnt several villages near Tioga Point (present-day Athens) to avenge the Wyoming Massacre the previous July.

3 Scenic Rock Outcrop (Mile 242R)—look up on the high ridge and you will see outstanding rock ledges.

4 Laceyville Bridge (Mile 241)—built in 1975, named the "Most Beautiful Bridge" (short span) by the American Institute of Steel Construction.

5 Laceyville (Mile 241L)—there are access park areas located above and below the bridge on the Laceyville side. This is a good stop for bait, groceries, hardware, and food all within one block of the river. **Laceyville's Oldest House (Mile 241L)**—built in 1781, this is the oldest existing house in the four counties of the Endless Mountains Heritage Region. The house overlooks the river and was active as a local stop during the canal era in the 1850s and 1860s, once serving as a lock-keeper's house.

6 Table Rock (Mile 240L)—a flat rock on the hillside overlooking the river at the mouth of Tuscarora Creek.

7 Black Walnut (Mile 238L)—located on Route 6 about halfway between Laceyville and Meshoppen. Once known as Black Walnut Bottom for the large quantity of black walnuts that once covered the bottom of a local creek.

8 Kiwanis Wyoming Co. Fairgrounds (Mile 235.5L)—One-mile nature trail.

9 Meshoppen (Mile 233L)—"Glass beads" is the translation of the Native American word Meshoppen; the town was most likely named because beads were exchanged here at a trading post in the later half of the 1700s.

10 Mehoopany (Mile 230R)—this interesting name actually came from the word "Hoppeny," which means "place of wild potatoes."

11 Procter & Gamble (Mile 230L)—a large paper-products plant, employing over 2,500 people.

Mile 229-228—Islands below Mehoopany—owned by DCNR; may be used for stopping points.

The Vosburg Neck—one of the most striking areas on the North Branch, a long loop with 500' high rock cuts. Eagles are common in this area. The 3,905' long Lehigh Valley Railroad tunnel cuts through the mountain at the base of the neck. Most of the rail lines built locally in 1865 - 1872 were placed on the former North Branch Canal towpath or canal bed except on the lower Neck, where the old canal bed is largely still intact.

12 Camp Lackawanna (Mile 226L)—this Presbyterian church retreat facility occupies much of the upstream side of the Neck. Overnight camping may be available, by prior arrangement only. **Endless Mountains Nature Center (Mile 226L)**—newly organized (2005) and currently located at Camp Lackawanna; except for scheduled public programs, prior arrangement strongly suggested before visiting.

13 Howland Preserve (Mile 224L)—this 690-acre property donated to the North Branch Land Trust occupies the downstream side of the Neck. The property is currently not open to the public except for special events.

14 Tunkhannock (Mile 218L)—originally spelled "Tunkhannuk" or "Tonkhonink," translated as "two small streams of water falling into one another" (or "opposite each other"). The two streams flowing into the Susquehanna River are Tunkhannock Creek (L) and Bowman Creek (R, downstream). Riverside Park is a good access with a short walk to the businesses of the town for food, groceries, hardware, or a movie. The town has a National Register Historic District and is the Wyoming County seat.

15 Rock Garden in the River (Mile 215)—a large outcropping of boulders in the river that should be paddled through with caution.

16 LaGrange Island (Mile 214)—located opposite the village of Osterhout, formerly known as La Grange, a station stop on the Lehigh Valley Railroad. The original Osterhout family were pioneer settlers. The Osterhout family later endowed the Osterhout Free Library in Wilkes-Barre.

17 Buttermilk Falls (Mile 207L)—one of the spectacular waterfalls in a scenic hemlock gorge on the east side of the river near the village of Falls. Can be seen by paddling just under the railroad bridge on river left.

Sullivan's March (also called Sullivan's Expedition) in August and September 1779 brought a 3,500-man army up the Susquehanna River valley from Pittston to eradicate the frontier settlements of the Native American tribes who were the allies of the British during the American Revolution. Encampments were located every 8-10 miles along the river in what later became Wyoming and Bradford counties. Historical markers are located along Rt. 6 and Rt. 220.

Visitor opportunities

Outfitters, guides, accommodations, and recreational opportunities are abundant in this area. For more specific information about attractions presented in this guide, please contact one of the following:

Endless Mountains Visitors Bureau, www.endlessmountains.org, 1-800-769-8999
Endless Mountains Heritage Region, www.endlessmountainsheritage.org, (570) 265-1528
Endless Mountain Outfitters, Inc., www.emo444.com, (570) 746-9140

Chambers of Commerce in communities along the river

Greater Valley C of C, Sayre, (570) 888-2217
Central Bradford Co. C of C, Towanda, www.cbradchamber.org, (570) 268-2732
Wysox C of C, Wysox, (570) 265-7511
Greater Wyalusing C of C, Wyalusing, www.wyalusing.net, (570) 746-4922
Wyoming County C of C, Tunkhannock, www.wyccc.com, (570) 836-7755

Susquehanna Greenway

The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership is dedicated to developing and sustaining the Susquehanna Greenway to connect communities and enrich lives through enhanced recreation, healthy living, economic prosperity and environmental stewardship. The Partnership guides planning for the Susquehanna Greenway and fosters community action to establish the Greenway. Establishment of the Greenway is a farsighted undertaking shaped by regional values and an over-arching vision, extending nearly 500 miles through 22 Pennsylvania counties. Greenway plans and designs are based on consideration of existing, currently planned, and newly proposed projects and ideas identified through public involvement. Please join us in creating the Susquehanna Greenway!

In case of emergency contact 911 or

Memorial Hospital, Route 6, Towanda, PA, (570) 265-2191
Tyler Memorial Hospital, 880 Route 6 West, Tunkhannock, PA, (570) 836-2161
PA State Police Barracks, Route 6 West, Tunkhannock, PA, (570) 836-2141
Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, 575 River Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA, (570) 829-8111

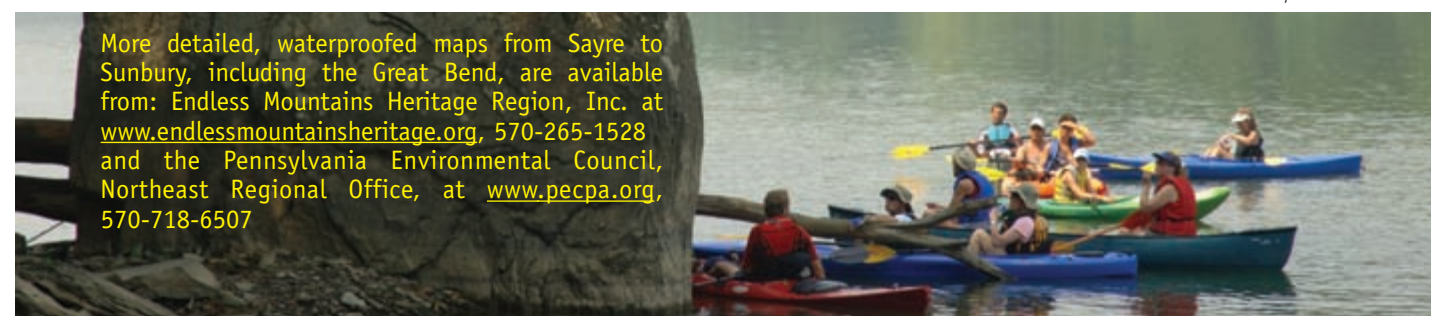
Camping on the River

241.5L—Endless Mountain Campground, Laceyville, PA, 570-869-2580
226L—Camp Lackawanna, Vosburg, PA, camping by prior arrangement only, 570-836-3444
206R—Susquehanna Shores Campground, West Falls, PA, 570-388-6921

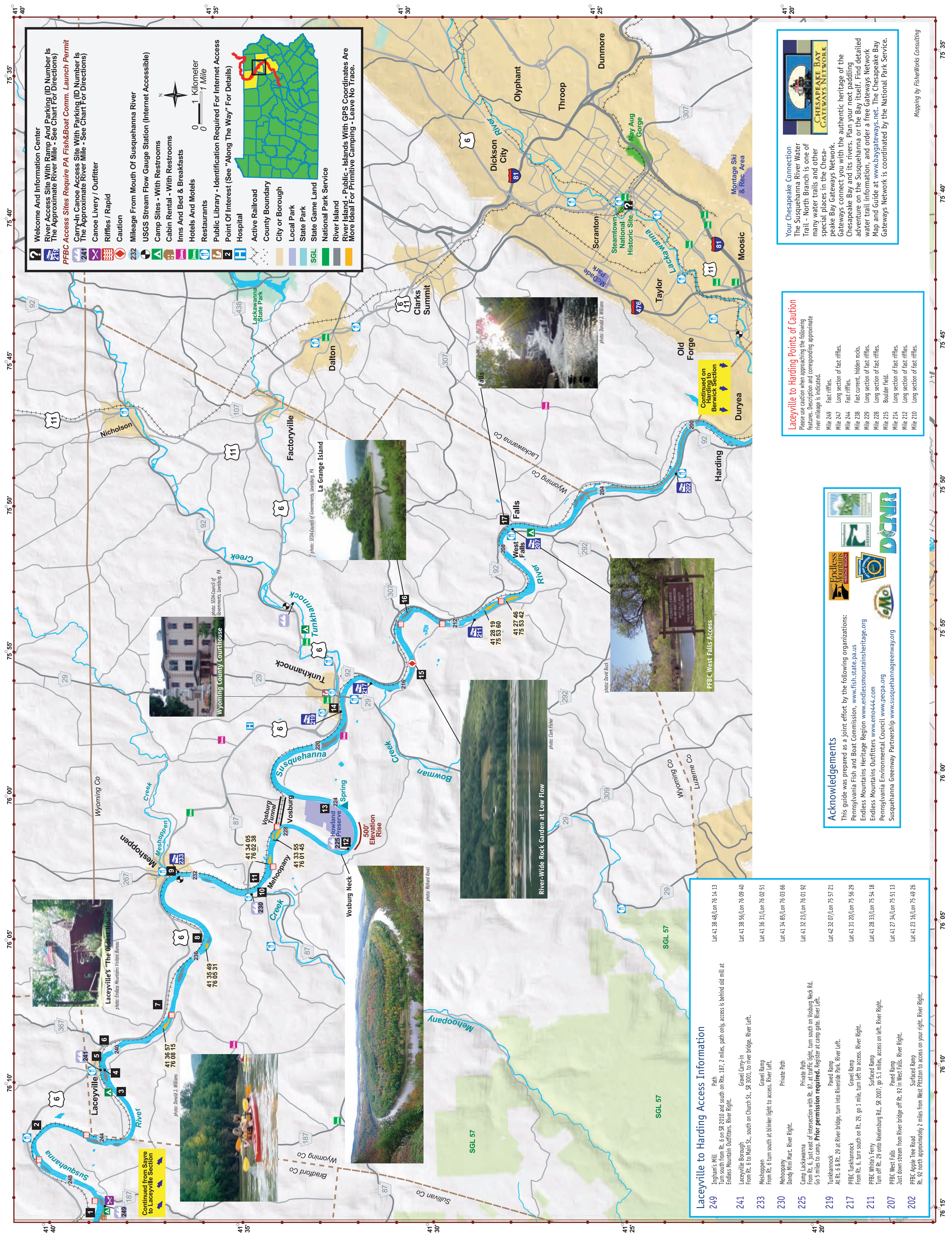
Low water

Although most rivers in the state are a challenge to paddle during summer dry periods and very low water, the North Branch of the Susquehanna River can be paddled in this section with little difficulty.

photo: Middleton Evans



More detailed, waterproofed maps from Sayre to Sunbury, including the Great Bend, are available from: Endless Mountains Heritage Region, Inc. at www.endlessmountainsheritage.org, 570-265-1528 and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Northeast Regional Office, at www.pecpa.org, 570-718-6507



Welcome And Information Center
 River Access Site With Ramp And Parking (ID Number Is The Approximate River Mile - See Chart For Directions)
PPBC Access Sites Require PA Fish&Boat Comm. Launch Permit
 Carry-In Canoe Access Site With Parking (ID Number Is The Approximate River Mile - See Chart For Directions)
 Canoe Livery / Outfitter
 Rifles / Rapid
 Caution
 232 Mileage From Mouth Of Susquehanna River
 USGS Stream Flow Gauge Station (Internet Accessible)
 Camp Sites - With Restrooms
 Cabin Rental - With Restrooms
 Inns And Bed & Breakfasts
 Hotels And Motels
 Restaurants
 Public Library - Identification Required For Internet Access
 Point Of Interest (See "Along The Way" For Details)
 Hospital
 Active Railroad
 County Boundary
 City or Borough
 Local Park
 State Park
 SGL
 National Park Service
 River Island
 River Island - Public - Islands With GPS Coordinates Are More Ideal For Primitive Camping - Leave No Trace.

Your Chesapeake Connection
 The Susquehanna River Water Trail - North Branch is one of many water trails and other special places in the Chesapeake Bay Gateway Network. Gateways connect you with the authentic heritage of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers. Plan your next paddling adventure on the Susquehanna or the Bay itself. Find detailed water trail information, and order a free Gateways Network Map and Guide at www.baygateways.net. The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network is coordinated by the National Park Service.

Laceyville to Harding Points of Caution
 Please use caution when approaching the following features. Description and corresponding approximate river mileage is indicated.
 Mile 249 Fast riffles
 Mile 247 Long section of fast riffles
 Mile 244 Fast riffles
 Mile 238 Fast current, hidden rocks
 Mile 229 Long section of fast riffles
 Mile 228 Long section of fast riffles
 Mile 215 Boulder field
 Mile 214 Long section of fast riffles
 Mile 212 Long section of fast riffles
 Mile 210 Long section of fast riffles

Acknowledgements
 This guide was prepared as a joint effort by the following organizations:
 Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, www.fish.state.pa.us
 Endless Mountains Heritage Region www.endlessmountainheritage.org
 Endless Mountains Outfitters www.emo444.com
 Pennsylvania Environmental Council www.ppecpa.org
 Susquehanna Greenway Partnership www.susquehannagreenway.org

Laceyville to Harding Access Information

249	Ingham's Mill Turn south from Rt. 6 on SR 2010 and south on Rt. 187, 2 miles, path only, access is behind old mill at Endless Mountain Outfitters. River Right.	Lat 41 38 48 / Lon 76 14 13
241	Laceyville Borough From Rt. 6 to Main St., south on Church St., SR 3001, to river bridge. River Left.	Lat 41 38 56 / Lon 76 09 40
233	Mehopany From Rt. 6 turn south at blinker light to access. River Left.	Lat 41 38 31 / Lon 76 02 51
230	Mehopany Bandy Mill Mat. River Right.	Lat 41 34 85 / Lon 76 03 66
225	Camp Laceyville From Rt. 6, turn south on Rt. 29, go 1 mile, turn left to access. River Right. Go 5 miles to camp. Prior permission required. Register at camp gate. River Left.	Lat 41 32 23 / Lon 76 01 92
219	Tunkhannock At Rt. 6 & Rt. 29 at river bridge, turn into Rivestine Park. River Left.	Lat 42 32 07 / Lon 75 57 21
217	PPBC Tunkhannock From Rt. 6, turn south on Rt. 29, go 1 mile, turn left to access. River Right.	Lat 41 31 20 / Lon 75 56 29
211	PPBC White's Ferry Turn off Rt. 29 onto Keelersburg Rd., SR 2007, go 5.1 miles, access on left. River Right.	Lat 41 28 33 / Lon 75 54 18
207	PPBC West Falls Just down stream from river bridge off Rt. 92 in West Falls. River Right.	Lat 41 27 34 / Lon 75 51 13
202	PPBC Angle Tree Road Rt. 92 north approximately 2 miles from West Pittston to access on your right. River Right.	Lat 41 23 16 / Lon 75 49 26

Mapping by FisherWorks Consulting